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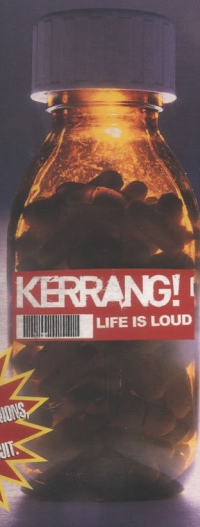
UP AND DOWN WITH THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROCK BAND!



FOREWORD BY MARILYN MANSON + WIN RARE CHILIS STUFF!

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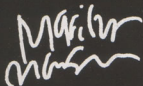
ALWAYS EXCEED THE STATED DOSE



JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.

I FIRST came across the Red Hot Chili Peppers when I interviewed the band for a paper I was editing. I thought they were complete and total assholes, but in a way I deserved to experience that because I was just some annoying kid journalist with a tape recorder. Then, ironically, 10 years later Flea bought one of my paintings for a lot of money and we started talking and we've since spoken on a number of occasions. I like their music, and I find myself really liking the new record. I always appreciated their importance, otherwise I wouldn't have wanted to write an article about them all those years ago. I only wanted to do things I was into – I was my own editor and I respected them.

I bump into Anthony Kiedis from time to time and I think he has probably tried to f**k all of my girlfriends in the past... but unsuccessfully.



Marilyn Manson
London,
December 2003

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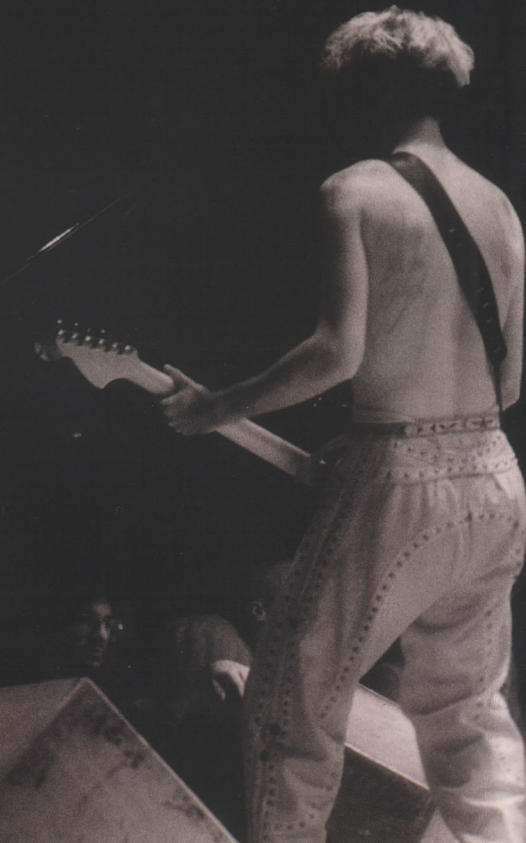
get up and Ju

THE CHILI PEPPERS RUMBLE INTO ACTION WITH TEEN SEX, STRIPCLUB BONDING AND – OF COURSE – SOCKS ON COCKS

LIKE THE rest of his band, and indeed like many whose lives come to be synonymous with the gilded peaks and seedy pits of California's most famous city, Anthony Kiedis was not from Los Angeles. He originated instead in Grand Rapids, Michigan, born there on November 1, 1962 to parents Margaret and John.

John Kiedis would soon leave the family home for the sun-kissed shores of LA where he pursued a more bohemian lifestyle as a bit-part Hollywood actor and screenwriter under the pseudonym of Blackie Dammett. Anthony remained in Michigan with his mother, but his father stayed in contact with his family, enthralling his young son with the tales of roles he was aiming for, those he'd lost, and some he'd even won. Any fleeting appearance on television by Blackie would have a proud Anthony running to school to announce his father's latest screen success the following morning.

By 1973, realising that Michigan offered little opportunity for her son beyond "drawing angel wings in the snow", Margaret decided that sending Anthony west to join his father in LA would be beneficial to his development, and so set the 11-year-old on a path that would indelibly shape his future years. ▶



[EARLY DAYS]

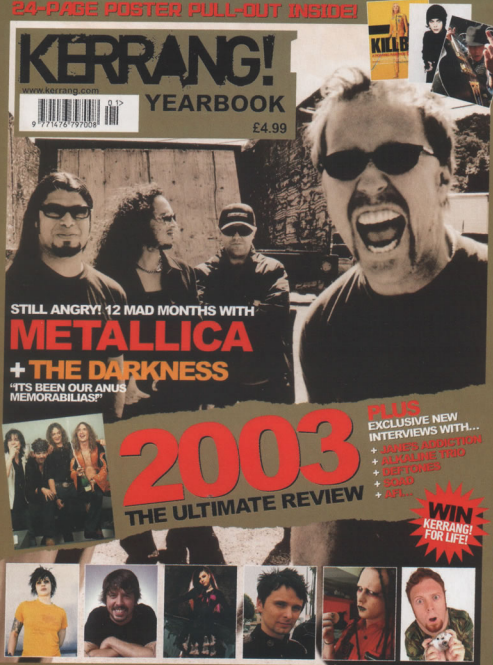
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We have Jiff-Off: the Chili Peppers, Vancouver, Canada, 1995

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The Blackie Dammett household was a far cry from the conservative, middle-class surroundings of Grand Rapids. Dammett was not, Anthony observed, "your average nine-to-five" parent. Indeed, his father's around the clock approach to the good life would resurface years later on 'BloodSugarSexMagik's heartache ballad, 'Breaking The Girl' ('Raised by my dad, Girl of the day, He was my man, That was his way'). According to Kiedis, the daily routine chez Dammett consisted of "fights, drugs and lots of guys and girls getting crazy". His father had a constant turnover of girlfriends and there was always someone somewhere willing to introduce his young charge to the delights of Hollywood highlife. Before he reached his 12th birthday, Anthony had smoked his first joint with his father and it wasn't much later on that he'd lost his virginity to one of Blackie's many ladyfriends who frequented the house. It was, he recalled, an adolescent's dream.

"It seemed like I'd landed in this magical kingdom where anything was possible," he said. "I got stoned, my father had a girl over the house without her shirt on. I said to myself, 'How lucky could a boy be?'"

Such a life without limits would come at a price — as Kiedis' reputation for womanising and the anguish of heroin addiction would testify. But as a 15-year-old with a keen interest in art and drama enrolled at Fairfax High School on Melrose it simply made him a self-assured teen. His early-learned self-confidence with women made him a highly charismatic proposition to members of the opposite sex, but popular with

back to the Australian city of Melbourne where he was born on October 16, 1962, and lived for five years until his parents' divorce sent him first to New York, and then to LA where his mother settled down with a jazz musician, Walter Urban Jr. Although the bassist later claimed his upbringing at the hands of his alcoholic stepfather who was always getting into fights with the LAPD was "very violent", Walter's love of

jazz planted the musical roots for his stepson's future. The house was always full of musicians, ready to play out the night with Walter and the pre-teen Balzary could often be found jamming with them. Indeed, he became so proficient at the trumpet that when the family arrived in LA, he

"My father's home was like a magical kingdom where anything was possible."

ANTHONY

other students, too. One lunchtime he came across his best friend, Tony Sherr being beaten up in the playground by a strange looking kid he didn't know. Stepping in to break up the fight, Kiedis found himself facing one Michael Balzary — aka 'Michael B The Flea'. It was a meeting that was to change his life.

LIKE THE rest of his future bandmates, Michael Peter Balzary was not a Hollywood native, or for that matter, even an American. His origins could be traced

secured himself the first chair in the LA Junior Philharmonic Orchestra. While Kiedis was sampling the illicit wares of the Hollywood highlife, Balzary was using the family stereo to immerse himself in the worlds of Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman and Dizzy Gillespie. He once met Gillespie — introduced to him by his mother — backstage at a gig, and the trumpet legend chatted to the budding musician who had spent many an hour playing along to his records.

Of course this wasn't something that cut much ▶

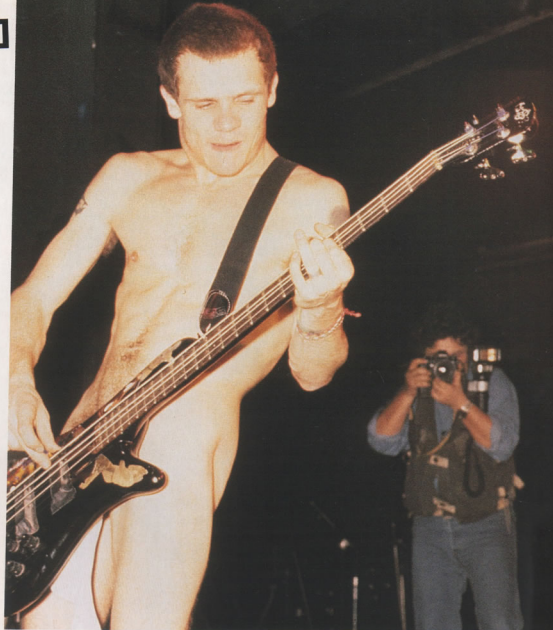
[EARLY DAYS]

ice with his classmates. To them, Balzary – or ‘Flea’ as he was increasingly known – was the weird kid with the odd accent whose love of classical music and be-bop jazz set him at odds with his peers, currently grooving to the sounds of the disco explosion, and set him up as the guy who got picked on. He wasn’t the only tormented schoolkid to end up in a band with the source of his woes (Korn singer Jonathan Davis was regularly on the after-school run from his future bassist Reggie ‘Fieldy’ Arvizu), but at Fairfax High one who did more picking than most was a kid by the name of Jack Irons. And Irons’ best friend was Hillel Slovak.

Slovak was born in Haifa in Israel but his parents moved to LA when he was five. He and Irons had first bonded over a shared love of Kiss, even forming their own ‘mime’ tribute to the band, before Slovak discovered a passion for Jimi Hendrix and began his own psychedelic guitar odyssey, and the pair formed the Led Zeppelin/Queen-influenced Chain Reaction. The Israeli-born guitarist was also a close friend of Anthony Kiedis, who in turn introduced him to his new-found friend, Flea.

AND SO the childhood bonds that can see those who chose the career of music persevere through the toughest times were forged. The Red Hot Chili Peppers didn’t yet exist in name, but they had a *form* at least. The four schoolfriends formed their first group – Los Faces – while still at Fairfax High. Musical influences were yet to come to the fore, as Los Faces didn’t play a single note – instead it functioned more as a social club where Kiedis, Slovak and Flea, and later, Irons, would meet and talk for hours. “We were so close,” says Flea. “We did everything together. First sex, first drugs, first time listening to Gang Of Four or Echo And The Bunnymen. All the most intimate experiences I had.”

Future Chilis lyrics full of references to brotherhood, then, or hug-happy bandshots were not mere exercises in sentimental naughtiness, but more a celebration of this



musical provocateurs. As the ‘80s began, Slovak and Irons invited Flea to fill in on bass duties for Chain Reaction – now re-christened Anthem. It mattered not that their new recruit neither knew how to play or even owned a bass for, fuelled by the low-end throb of ‘70s funk pioneers P-Funk and Funkadelic, he soon became an accomplished player. Newly confident, he didn’t hang around. In 1982 he left to join LA hard-

of local venues such as The Starwood, which had become a magnet for a whole underground of druggies, visionaries, wasters, wackos and anyone else who was fuelled by the new wave of LA bands – Black Flag, The Germs, The Go-Gos, currently sending their sounds across the city.

It wasn’t until 1983 when Gary Allen, a local promoter and a friend of Flea’s asked him to get a band together to open a show at his club The Rhythm Lounge at the Café De Grande, that the Fairfax four performed together as a band. Armed with little more than a funky bassline from Flea, Kiedis muttering the words to one of his poems, and being box-fried on the finest Hollywood hallucinogens, they took the stage. Billed as the extensively monikered Tony Flow And The Miraculously Majestic Masters Of Mayhem they cut loose with the appropriately named ‘Out In LA’. It was their sole offering.

“People loved it,” said Flea. “We didn’t even know what we were doing, it just happened by its own force. We just started playing and it exploded.”

THOUGH FLEA, Slovak and Irons continued in their other bands for some time, the Red Hot Chili Peppers as they were now known were beginning to become local folklore with their unhinged and unpredictable performances.

It wasn’t long before the band came to the attention of Lindy Goetz – an industry stal-

“We were so close. We did everything together. First sex, first drugs.”

FLEA

deep-rooted deeply-held friendship. The teenage Flea and Kiedis would often escape LA for the nature reserves of Yosemite in Northern California, where the pair could go hiking around the woods and mountains for days on end. As Flea would remark, much later, when darker times had descended upon the Chili Peppers, “I think there were times when Anthony and I were all each other had.”

But before tragedy was to raise its ugly head, the four aspiring musicians (or the “four motherf**kers from Fairfax” as Kiedis would coin it), had a reputation to forge as

core crew Fear. Without him, Anthem continued, renaming themselves What Is This? – an appropriate title given the eclectic, genre-hopping soundclash they were creating. Anthony Kiedis was drawing inspiration from the contrasting, burgeoning hardcore and rap scenes – the former had given him the gut-level impetus to make music, the latter the notion he could do so “without being Marvin Gaye”. Though they weren’t all yet playing together in one band, Kiedis, Flea, Slovak and Irons were always hanging out together, soaking up whatever they heard blasting out of boomboxes in the parking lots

Get that photographer's got a nice view: Flea and Kiedis unveil their stacking fillers

wart whose work with labels, management and production companies had made him a ubiquitous face on the LA music scene. Tipped off by a colleague, he went to check them out—the band only had five songs to their name, but it was enough to convince Goetz that this was something worth putting his name to, something completely different.

And the Chills were different to anything else out there. Day-Glo bodypaint, outlandish headgear and frightening trousers made of unspecified materials were a striking enough proposition in themselves, but it was their music that truly set them apart. Not as nihilistic as punk's amphetamine overdose, but still infected by its energy. Not as vacuous as the hair metal preeners permeating the Strip, but still primed to party hard. And far more uproarious in its appropriation of funk beats than new wave's tiny recitals. There's was an incredible, psychedelic, collision of raw, body-bumping funk grooves, rocking riffs and some lunatic factor X.

Offstage, life had become just as chaotic—the band lived together in a "seedy ghetto style" apartment on Hollywood Boulevard, that was missing its front door ever since their landlady, unable to extract the rent from them, removed it in frustration. Her party-centric tenants simply continued dwelling there, rent-free, sans door. Anthony and Flea would arrange meetings with Goetz as frequently as possible, since a meeting meant lunch and lunch meant food, some-

thing of a luxury to the aspiring musicians.

"We actually really liked Lindy," recalls Flea. "It wasn't like he was just a mark or anything, we were just hungry."

Goetz for his part told them he'd get the band a deal, all they had to do was keep playing. So they gigged wherever they could—occasionally with disastrous results. The promoter of their first out-of-town show in the uptight, upmarket resort of Aspen told them never to offend his clients again with their "black" music—but more often than not, adding to their already substantial live following. One show in particular, at a Hollywood strip joint called the Kit-Kat, would cement itself forever in the minds of those who saw them that night, as the band took to the stage wearing nothing but strategically placed socks.

Ironically, the idea began life as a prank played by Kiedis to fend off the advances of an unwanted female admirer, who had a penchant for sending him cards with a fold-out penis inside. One day the woman showed up at his house unannounced, so the singer, equally unannounced, decided to greet her wearing nothing but a sock.

The band decided that repeating the gesture en masse would be an appropriate gesture for a strip club, although they hadn't counted on the owner's aversion to seeing male public hair. "No pubes!" he screamed hysterically. "I told you guys, no pubes!" Exhibitionism notwithstanding the perfor-

mance had made them a serious talking point among LA's discerning gig-goers. Six months after their first show, the band had an eight-album deal with EMI.

THE EXCITEMENT of the four friends' first steps as a proper band didn't, however, make it onto the first album. For one thing, Slovak and Irons found their participation hampered by red tape—in the form of an earlier development deal they had signed with MCA for What Is This?

Forced to choose between the two bands, the pair—much to the chagrin of Flea and Kiedis—opted to stick with their own band. Since EMI had booked studio time and a producer—Gang Of Four guitarist Andy Gill—the remaining Chili Peppers had to urgently find replacements for their absent friends and so settled on Jack Sherman (guitar) and Cliff Martinez (drums, formerly of Captain Beefheart's band). The newcomers coped as best they could, but the sessions lacked the explosive energy of the founding quartet's live performances.

Flea was devastated they hadn't made the record—in his eyes, the classic album—they could have made, but his bandmate reasoned that such things were part of life's rich learning process. He was right—such a process would take the Red Hot Chili Peppers to some pretty dark and desperate places before it was done with them, but right now, the ride was just beginning. ●

Feel the gear (from left) Irons, Slovak, Flea and Kiedis, 1987



Pumping Irons: Jack in overtly macho mood

GREEN PEPPERS

With an eight-album deal in the bag, what could go wrong? How about half the band not being allowed to play on the record... The lads blow their first big chance.

THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS 1984, EMI America

KK

IT'S STAGGERING to think that it's been almost 20 years since the Red Hot Chili Peppers released this, their debut album. Fusing the mellifluous grooves of the righteous funk overlords Parliament and Sly And The Family Stone with the inflammatory hardcore of Black Flag, The Germs, X and Minutemen, the shag-happy foursome inadvertently created the primary template for funk metal which would be imitated by a slew of bands for years to come. However, at this embryonic stage, their first foray into this innovative hybrid falls short of realising its potential by a country mile.

The 11 tracks here now sound incredibly dated, lacking the explosive verve that would eventually surface three years later on their far superior third album, 'The Uplift Mofo Party Plan'.

Back in 1983, the band had acquired a must-see reputation for putting on manic live performances – which famously involved accessorising their hard groove with nothing but strategically placed sports socks on their genitalia. The buzz created a frenzy in the music industry with many labels desperate to sign the band. Spoilt for choice the Red Hot Chili Peppers coolly opted for EMI's eight-album deal.

The label acted swiftly and booked time at El Dorado Studios in Los Angeles with Gang Of Four guitarist Andy Gill handling production duties.

In their desire to quickly bounce the essence of their live energy onto vinyl and into the shops, the band immediately ran into problems. Jack Irons and Hillel Slovak were contractually bound to MCA as part of a development deal with their other band What Is This?. Undeterred, EMI simply told Kiedis and Flea to find temporary replacements, leading to the recruitment of guitarist Jack Sherman and former Captain Beefheart drummer Cliff Martinez. It didn't leave them a great deal of time to work together before Gill pressed 'record'.

Understandably, then, the band was not

the tight unit they should have been when they entered the studio. Also, whether due to a clash of personalities or Kiedis and Flea's arrogance of youth, the producer and band quickly found themselves butting heads. The resultant recording is an uptight effort which is glaringly at odds with the early, LSD-fuelled performances. Legend has it that Flea – a major fan of the Gang Of Four – was so nonplussed with Gill's work as the producer that he presented him with a turd in a pizza box during the sessions. Then again, Gill had suggested they use a drum machine, so perhaps he deserved it.

THE DIFFERENCE between the compositions written with Irons and Slovak, and those written with Sherman and Martinez add to the general sense of disorganisation. The band's earlier tracks – bearing Irons and Slovak credits – include 'Get Up And Jump', 'Green Heaven' and 'Police Helicopter', all bursting with eye-popping, elastic fury. 'True Men Don't Kill Coyotes' and 'Buckle Down', however, plod along

and lack the raw exuberance of the original line-up's naive, exuberant songwriting. "In retrospect," Flea now admits, "the smart thing to do would have been to try and keep Jack and Hillel there at least for the recording process to keep the original raw and rollicking feeling we had at the time."

"What we originally set out to do," adds Kiedis, "was to be complete and utter perpetrators of hardcore, bone-crunching mayhem sex things from heaven."

"To try and describe that to another musician, and have it mean something, is nearly impossible unless you've grown up with that person. It was crazy, but when you get a guy in the band you've got to be prepared to embrace him emotionally for years and years. It's very much like being in love and being married. And you have to be willing to accept and tolerate and compromise sometimes..."

Whether or not compromise wrecked the band's first attempts at capturing their 'bone-crunching mayhem', the finger of

Chilis in 1984: the world at their feet, but an album that didn't quite fit



KKKKKK INCREDIBLE!
 KKKKK GREAT
 KKKK AVERAGE
 KK PISS POOR
 K RUBBISH

blame can certainly be thrust in Gill's direction. His production is lacklustre and dampens their youthful lust for life. Flea's bass parts are often at the forefront, burying Sherman's riffs, and the treble-heavy mixing lacks either warmth or vitality.

The inclusion of five early demos on 2003's reissue of the album speaks volumes. The roughly hewn versions of famil-

“In retrospect the smart thing to do would have been to try and keep Jack and Hillel there.” – Flea

iar songs – including ‘Green Heaven’ and ‘Out In LA’, recorded by Fear drummer Spit Stix – feature the original line-up and are far more representative of the band’s potent live show.

‘The Red Hot Chili Peppers’ should have blown listeners’ socks off like a fiery jalapeño. Instead, there’s barely enough fire here to light a fag.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'True Men Don't Kill Coyotes'

Vibrant strutting anthem with vivid lyrical imagery, suggesting that hallucinogenic help was at hand – they didn't write about 'Riding wild on a Paisley dragon' or 'Sabre-tooth horses' after one cup of coffee too many. First mention of Hollywood. Not the last.

2 'Baby Appeal'

Slow-burning groove, with the lyric, 'We groove the buttocks walking out in the street' an early statement of intent.

3 'Buckle Down'

Passable funk, with Kiedis offering the message to stop dicking about and buckle down. Nice guitar solo.

4 'Get Up And Jump'

Frantically-paced with Flea's slap and pop digits working overtime.

Kiedis asks whether you have a pumpkin in your pants. This sort of thing was possible in the '80s.

5 'Why Don't You Love Me'

A cover of the Hank Williams country classic. Only with funk.

6 'Green Heaven'

A rare example of a political rant, taking in such hot potatoes as the KKK, the government, the police and Scientology. Message somewhat undermined by an invitation to the land of peace lovin' whales.

7 'Mommy Where's Daddy'

Gentle jazzier peppered with thoroughly dubious undertones of a father and daughter's relationship.

8 'Out In LA'

The first of many songs referring to the Chili Peppers as brothers and

saying how great they are. Kiedis claims to try to have sex with 100 women against a wall, but stops at 99 because he heard a phone.

9 'Police Helicopter'

One of the album's most pleasing, hyperactive punk-funk moments, including the lyric, 'Police helicopter lands on my eye'. That'll be a long night in casualty, then.

10 'You Always Sing The Same'

A 10-second punk parody with the lyrics, 'You always sing the same' yelled over and over again. Do you see what they did there? Hilarious.

11 'Grand Pappy Du Plenty'

An atmospheric instrumental conclusion. Sounds like the music to any early Kurt Russell film, especially when things 'get personal'.



Return to bass camp:
Flea gets in the groove



What was this radical new musical fusion that the Chili Peppers were dabbling in? And did it have to involve prancing around in little shorts? Strap in for the low-end, high voltage story of funk rock...

BY 1989 the Red Hot Chili Peppers had been mixing up the fluid dynamics of funk with the primal wallop of rock for six years and three albums, but they'd failed to make more than the tiniest dent in the consciousness of the great record buying public. In November that year, the band released the second single from their 'Mother's Milk' album. The track was a cover of Stevie Wonder's 1973 hit 'Higher Ground', in the hands of the Chilis, Wonder's wide-eyed soulfulness was transformed into a muscular, funk-ed-up workout.

Aided in no small part by a promo that captured the band's technicolour lunacy, it instantly embedded itself in the frontal lobes of anyone who heard it and refused to be dislodged. Clubs the country over throbbed to its groin-level pulse; all of sudden, even the meekest rock fan suddenly discovered rhythms they never knew they had. The Red Hot Chili Peppers had finally arrived. And so, at precisely the same time, had funk rock.

THE WORLDS of rock and funk entered each other's respective orbits long before Flea picked up his first bass. As the psychedelic haze of the late '60s began to dissipate, a slew of musicians who had earned their chops playing relatively straight-laced soul music realised that they had an opportunity to expand the boundaries of music, as well as their own minds in the process. Outfits such as Sly And The Family Stone, Parliament and Funkadelic – the latter pair sharing a frontman and focal point in George Clinton, a larger-than-life space cadet who looked like he'd be just as at home on the fourth ring of Saturn – stretched things to breaking point, upping tempos, elasticating rhythms and dispensing with love songs in favour of altogether more primal urges.

Fuelled in equal measure by sex and drugs, funk was the ultimate good-time music. It's no surprise that '70s behemoths Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith, off their heads on assorted chemicals and up to their nuts in groupies, dabbled, sometimes with surprisingly effective results – witness Zeppelin's 'The Ocean' or Aerosmith's 'Sweet Emotion', both of which replicated funk's lithe grooves to great effect.

But the band who truly built a bridge between the two genres was the multiracial Atlanta six-piece Mother's Finest. Between 1976 and 1983 they released a string of albums that shattered the divisions, combining the rock'n'roll punch of Zeppelin with the fluid grooves of Parliament. Finest never scaled the same commercial heights that some of their successors would – they were too heavy for black radio and too funky for white rock fans – but they undeniably sowed the seeds for what was to come.

TWANG TANGO



The good, the bad and the funky: (clockwise from left) Mother's Finest, Extreme, Faith No More and Fishbone



If Mother's Finest gave birth to funk rock, then it was the Red Hot Chili Peppers who nursed it through puberty and into adolescence. Influenced in equal measure by George Clinton and LA punk nutters Germs and Fear, their eponymous 1984 debut album was released just as LA's cock rock scene was about to explode across the Sunset Strip. Compared to the likes of Mötley Crüe and Ratt, the Chili Peppers sounded like they'd beamed down from another planet.

By the time the band roped in Parliament's George Clinton to produce their 'Freaky Styley' album the following year, things were starting to snowball. A cabal of like-minded souls took the Chillis' lead and began to spoon hefty doses of slap-bass and fluid guitar work into their sonic stews. Hollywood outfit Fishbone – longtime friends and peers of Kiedis' crew – finally got their booties into gear and committed their impressively high-energy live sound onto vinyl in the shape of 1985's self-titled debut album. The same year, San Francisco oddballs Faith No More issued their eponymous debut album (imported to the UK as 'We Care A Lot'), which anchored its artful post-punk sensibilities with four-stringer Billy Gould's elasticated slap-bass.

In 1987, the Chillis released their third album: 'The Uplift Mofo Party Plan'. Leaner, meaner and even more assured in its musical cross-pollination than its predecessors, it set a new high-water mark for the burgeoning genre. It defined what the Chili Peppers were doing, and why they were doing it. 'Funk is my attitude,' yelled Anthony Kiedis on the track 'Funky Crime'. 'Cos the funk is crazy.'

And people were starting to listen.

The year that funk rock broke was 1989. The Chili Peppers released 'Mother's Milk' and watched their sales soar past the million mark in America for the first time; Faith No More turned music on its head with 'The Real Thing', a smart, slippery record that re-drew rock's boundaries; Fishbone were capitalising on the creative success of the previous year's 'Truth And Soul', fermenting ideas and inspirations that would, 18 months later, blossom into their masterpiece 'The Reality Of My Surroundings'.

Suddenly, everybody and their nephew wanted a slice of the funk rock pie. A few, such as New York's Living Colour – whose guitarist Vernon Reid had played with jazz-funk combo Defunkt and toured with Public Enemy – could stake a legitimate claim. Others, ranging from the merely hopeless (tune-free thrashers Mordred) to the truly abysmal (preening cock rock dunderheads KingOfTheHill, second division hardcore mob Ludachrist), were clearly chancers of the highest order hitching a ride on the biggest bandwagon currently rolling through town.

Guitarist than most were Extreme.

Second-generation hair metal saps from the college town of Boston, they were astute enough to spot a niche in the market for a band who could live up their otherwise anonymous songs via the casual deployment of lumpy basslines that would have been laughed out of the studio by even the most pharmaceutically-addled funk musician. Their most heinous crime was the single 'Get The Funk Out', a song which was as excruciatingly awful as its punning title suggested. It crashed into the UK Top 20. The world had truly gone mad for funk rock.

It took the band who created it all to put an end to the insanity. The Red Hot Chili Peppers released 'BloodSugarSexMagik' in September 1991, as the movement that they spawned was simultaneously reaching its nadir. From 'Give It Away' to 'Suck My Kiss', the record was the sound of a band firing on all cylinders. Even a band as thick-skinned as Extreme realised that it would be a fruitless task trying to out-funk the Chillis.

Funk rock didn't die, at least not straightaway – throughout the first half of the '90s, the likes of Rage Against The Machine, Skunk Anansie and even Korn built their sound on the sort of arsequaking basslines that could level cities. But these bands were understandably wary of pinning their colours to the funk rock mast. It had become the genre that dare not speak its name.

In 1995, the Red Hot Chili Peppers released their sixth album, 'One Hot Minute'. With former Jane's Addiction guitarist Dave Navarro – a man not known for his innate funkiness – on six-string duties, the Chili Peppers eased back on the elastic grooves in favour of a more layered, psychedelic approach. The original Dr Funkensteins had abandoned the monster that they created. Without them, it swiftly died.

IN 2004, funk metal sits a couple of rungs down from necrophilia on the ladder of social acceptability. The world of hip-hop has superseded funk as the destination of choice for rock's more discerning cultural tourists. The Chili Peppers are the only band keeping the funk rock flag flying, and even then it's at half mast; these days, they might lay down the odd fat groove per album, but the balls-out lunacy of old has largely been consigned to the sock drawer of history.

Funk rock's reputation as the music of chancers, while partly deserved, is unfair. Scrape away the Extremes of the world, and you're left with something that was, at its very best, vibrant, energetic, and groundbreaking, both musically and culturally. It threw up great bands, great characters and, on the odd occasion, some truly great music. ●

WEIRD SCIENCE

With George Clinton's production, the Chili Peppers re-emerged with a dip in their hip, a glide in their stride and the first album they could be proud of.

FREAKY STYLEY

1985, EMI Manhattan



OFTEN MALIGNED as the misfit, misplaced funk venture before the Chili Peppers found the adrenals groove-rock formula that paved the way to commercial success, go back to 'Freaky Styley' now and you'll find that it has aged surprisingly well for an album pushing nearly two decades in existence. That in itself is an impressive feat when you consider that the legions of clumsy funk metallers that followed in their wake cannot say as much – but it also stands as one of the more interesting musical moments in the Chili's lengthy history.

After all, the idea that a bunch of drug-addled skinny white boys with one very stale debut album could net themselves the production talents of George Clinton – the highly revered and very black mastermind behind '70s funk monoliths Parliament and Funkadelic – was pretty interesting in itself. According to Flea, Clinton was an all-round "epic, mythological genius". He was also likely to produce something many times better than the less-than-fruitful relationship with Gang Of Four guitarist-producer Andy Gill on the debut – an album bereft both of decent tunes and any linking of the band's already incredible live performances.

With Clinton's help 'Freaky Styley' emerged sounding far more consistent than its predecessor. It was the sound of a band who might at last be going places. Where, exactly, was another matter altogether – but suffice to say the current trajectory had taken them to a musical hinterland that had visitors struggling through an extensive lexicon of different ways to say 'funky' and 'groovy'.

Though Clinton had quelled the more hyperactive impulses that always seemed to resist replication on record, and though the gurning, moaning collage of a manic band on the cover seemed at odds with the fluidity and (comparative) control of the music within (as did their unheeded stage shows), he had given the band their first proper taste of The Funk.

The F-word oozed through this album as

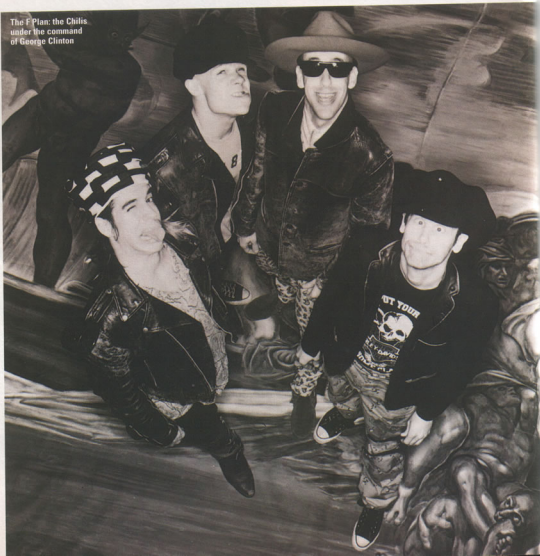
the previously threadbare, twitching demos found themselves filled with a sensual groove dynamic and fleshed out by a brass section operating as 'The Horny Horns' (of course). It was a mix still far too outlandish to trouble radio – deemed too funky for white audiences and too punky for black – but the boom-centric shakedown of 'Jungleman' and the sassy swagger of 'The Brothers Cup' suggested a greater sense of songwriting had taken root.

IT WAS perhaps no coincidence that surrounded by such choice 'grind' material, Anthony Kiedis would consolidate his

aversion to being anything but a 'vague bastard'. There was certainly little ambiguity about the agenda behind 'Freaky Styley'. Instead, the album was infused with ever-more explicit and ever more involved rhyme schemes pertaining to the Chili's favourite recreational pursuit; the ladies.

The appropriately named 'Sex Rap' was an X-rated recital of some of Kiedis' favourite things over a lithe mix of body bumping beats ('With my thumb I strum her plum! Start to make her or-ga-sm'), while 'The Brothers Cup' bore the immortal couplet, 'We are the brothers cup! We like

The F Plan: the Chili's under the command of George Clinton



to get it up', and 'Catholic School Girls Rule' needed little explanation. Against the brash braggadocio of hip hop today, such things seem positively quaint, but at the time it was foul-minded enough to help fuel the censorious machinations of Tipper Gore and the PMRC.

George Clinton quelled their hyperactive impulses and gave them a first taste of The Funk.

Of course, having a producer with such an obvious presence and legacy as George Clinton at the helm meant that at times 'Freaky Styley' assumed an identity other than that of a self-assured second album by one of LA's most promising and innovative acts.

The horn sections and arrangements on 'Hollywood (Africa)', 'Yertle The Turtle' and 'The Brothers Cup' were so steeped in the cadences of '70s funk that they sounded more like some weird hybrid side-project of the producer than an original creation by what was essentially a rock band, while the edgier abrasions of 'Battleship' and 'Blackeyed Blonde' fell far flatter than their punkish tendencies should have allowed. In short, as long as there were grooves in need of some serious groovification, then the P-funk doctor was as good as it got, but for a band who could do (and had been trying to do) more with their sound than just freak with the phat, it was a limitation that became quickly apparent.

But when it worked, there was some dazzling alchemy on display; 'American Ghost Dance' halted their libidinous flow to deliver a delicious slice of politically-minded floor-filling funk that satisfied the head as much as the feet; the title-track was a hazy kaleidoscope of deep chill experimentation, while 'Catholic School Girls Rule' took its brat-punk guitars and frat-boy sentiments to create a more scabrous fusion that would shape the sound of the next two albums far more so than the laid-back stylings advocated by Clinton.

And while it's still the album most avoided by the guitar-loving factions of the RHCP fanbase, it's those psycho-sexual low-end vibes of the deep funk roots planted here that could be found informing the serpentine grooves of the mega-selling platinum smash 'BloodSugarSexMagik'.

THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

FREAKY STYLEY



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Jungleman'

Bottomless-pit bass rumbles and vocals from the mothership combine to announce that something very funky this way comes.

2 'Hollywood (Africa)'

Faithful reproduction of '70s funk legends The Meters' classic homeland anthem, 'Africa', cunningly renamed 'Hollywood'.

3 'American Ghost Dance'

A hypnotic low-end thunk framed with a dynamic horn section made a homecoming classic out of a rare, politically minded moment.

4 'If You Want Me To Stay'

Lacenic lashings of seductive funk — the Chilis at their grooviest.

5 'Nevermind'

Blistering horn crescendos and high tensile slap action lift what is

just a repetition of the fact that this is, 'The Red Hot... Chili... Peppers'!

6 'Freaky Styley'

A lowriding beat propels a snaking bassline into an endless sunset of psychedelic guitar feedback for the perfect chillout interlude.

7 'Blackeyed Blonde'

Nimble-fingered, bass jive impressive in its dexterity but little else.

8 'Brothers Cup'

A spring-loaded slice of sassy funk delight and an album highlight.

9 'Battleship'

High-velocity, punk-flavoured missile that missed its target. On 'Freaky Styley' speed was *not* king.

10 'Lovin' And Touchin''

Mercurially short saccharine effort

that sat squarely at odds with the band's 'if it moves...' mentality with regard to the opposite sex.

11 'Catholic School Girls Rule'

Hard-edged guitar groover *far* more suited to a bunch of cock-waving hedonists projecting their unwholesome designs on the uniform. Or rather the removal of it.

12 'Sex Rap'

They like to make you 'Cum to the rhythm of the drums', don't you know. Not easily done.

13 'Thirty Dirty Birds'

Fun but throwaway wordplay from Kiedis, over in 12 seconds flat.

14 'Yertle The Turtle'

How do you end an LP full of 101 junkified ways to get your freak on? With a song about turtles...

FLEA

BASSIST, 1983-PRESENT

HE MAY do the world's best impression of a pumped-up, perma-gurning, hyperactive chimp, but deep down the man that Fairfax High School mates dubbed Michael B The Flea is a sensitive, teetotal, yoga-and-meditation-practising family man – and this low-end theorist maintains that the Red Hot Chili Peppers' greatest days are yet to come.

CHILDHOOD "As a kid, I was either completely introverted and scared to death of people or I was pulling down my pants and screaming at the top of my lungs. I had a very violent upbringing. My stepfather had shoot-outs with the cops. I slept in the backyard because I was scared. By the time I was 12 or 13, I was out until three or four in the morning, carousing on drugs."

"I had a very violent upbringing. By the time I was 12 or 13, I was out until three or four in the morning, carousing on drugs."

ANTHONY KIEDIS "Meeting Anthony Kiedis in high school had a lot to do with how I ended up as a musician. He was the first kid I met who didn't give a shit about being like anybody else. The way he talked, the way he dressed, and the way he acted had a big influence on me. He was so anti. He thought anyone who tried to be like anyone else was lame."

EARLY DAYS "Me and Hillel and Anthony used to live together in this house. People would come over, we'd hang out, smoke pot and drink beer, put socks on our dicks and run around. It was kids living together, having fun."

SONGWRITING "A good songwriter is someone who has something interesting to say. I've heard great songs from people who could barely string together a couple of chords, and I've heard shitty music come from world-renowned virtuosos. Being a good songwriter requires being in touch with all the emotions and stuff that are flying through the air around you."

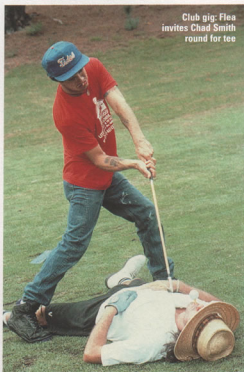
SEX "The majority of young men I know are led around by their dicks. I was."

TOURING "I hate it. It's creatively unhealthy. You play the same shit every night and become a chile of yourself. When we're having fun and rocking it's unbeatable, but a lot of times it's a drag, and this band should never be a drag."

SUCCESS "Success basically means money – and I have no aversion to success."

ROCK'N'ROLL "I don't wanna hear rehearsed rock'n'roll – it bores the shit out of me. I want to hear innovative music in rock. To be a modern rock band and not be innovative is to suck."

DRUGS "When I found drugs, I thought I'd found the greatest thing. All you do is snort this hit up your nose or stick this needle in your arm, and you're a f***king genius. I started doing drugs when I was 11 years old and I didn't stop until I was 31. I did heroin, cocaine, psychedelics, and I smoked pot every



Club gig: Flea invites Chad Smith round for tea

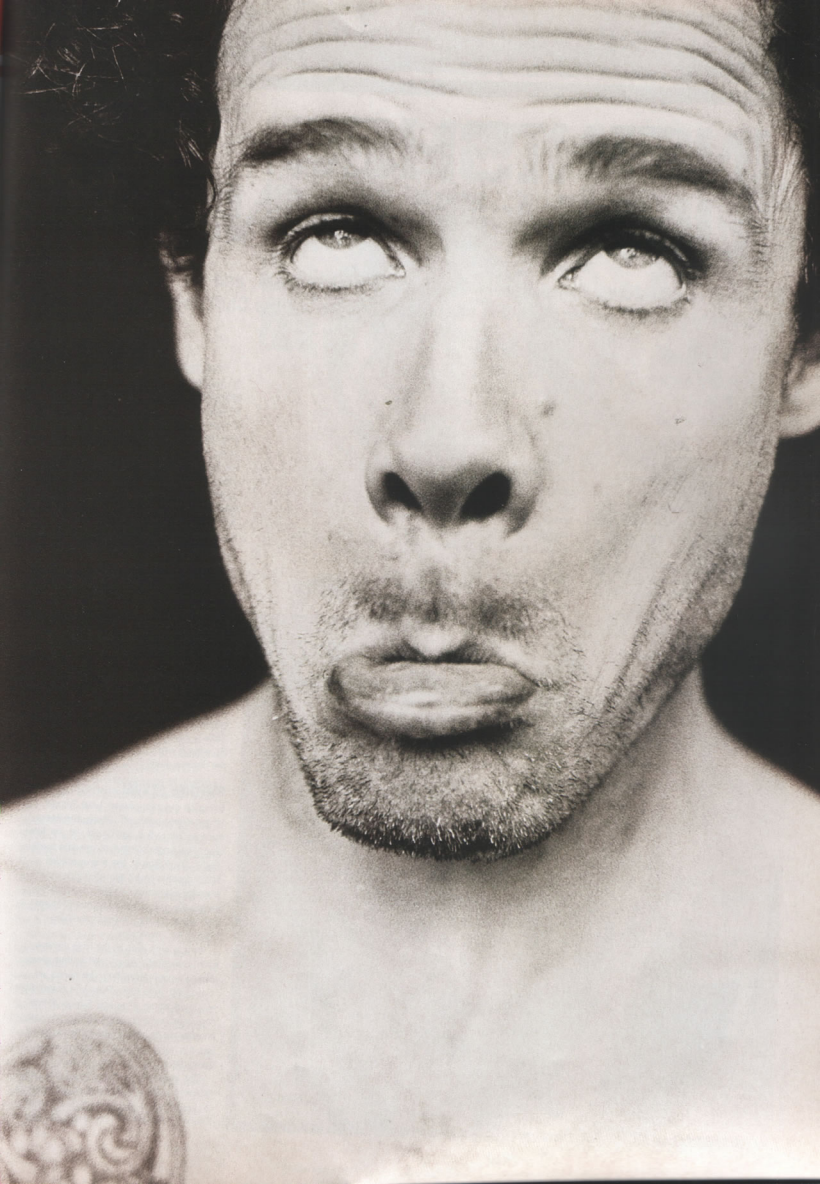
day. A couple of things made me stop. One of the things was that I got sicker than shit and I was just tired of it."

LOS ANGELES "The soul of this city is a huge part of who we are. And I think the soul of this city is an old and beautiful thing."

THE FUTURE "As long as the music is vibrant and exciting and meaningful for us to do, we're going to continue. Music is a spiritual exercise. We're trying to get close to the source of where it comes from. If we didn't feel movement in the music, that feeling of change, then we wouldn't still be together. It's not like we need the money."

FLEA FACTS!

- Born October 16, 1962 in Melbourne, Australia.
- Flea's family – his mother Patricia, sister Karen and stepfather Walter Urban Jr – relocated from Melbourne to New York in 1968, before moving to LA in the early '70s.
- Flea's first instrument was drums but, inspired by his stepfather, an aspiring jazz musician, he took up the trumpet aged 11. As a teenager, he played trumpet in the LA Junior Philharmonic Orchestra.
- Flea didn't start playing the bass until he was 17. He was taught how to play by Hillel Slovak.
- At 18, Flea left his first band Anthym to play with LA punk heroes Fear. He was sacked from the band when he started focusing his attention on the Chili Peppers.
- Flea married Loesha Zeivar in 1985. The couple's daughter Clara was born on September 16, 1988. Though Flea and Loesha split up in 1990, they remain on friendly terms and have joint custody of Clara.
- Flea is currently dating Snake River Conspiracy singer Tobey Torres, who appears in the band's video for "The Zephyr Song".
- Flea does the voice for Donnie Thornberry in the cartoon series "The Wild Thornberrys". His movie CV includes "Less Than Zero", "Back To The Future II" and "... III", "My Own Private Idaho" and "The Big Lebowski".
- In demand as a session musician, Flea has played on albums by Johnny Cash, Alanis Morissette, Jewel, Tricky, Mick Jagger and The Mars Volta.
- In 2001, Flea opened a music school in LA called Silverlake Conservatory Of Music to teach aspiring musicians everything from Black Flag to Bartok.
- For the past decade Flea has practised Kundalini yoga with LA yoga teacher Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa, whose other students include Madonna and Cindy Crawford.



UNFINISHED FUNKY BUSINESS

With two disappointing albums behind them, heroin taking hold, and the threat of a split looming on the horizon, would it be third time lucky for the Chili Peppers?

THE UPLIFT MOFO PARTY PLAN

1987, EMI Manhattan

★★★★

TO MANY, 1989's potent 'Mother's Milk' was the calling card that introduced the Hollywood quartet to the world at large. But to its credit, 'The Uplift Mofa Party Plan' did an extraordinary amount of groundwork and made amends for their previously frustrating output. After two underwhelming efforts — 1984's self-titled debut and 1985's misguided 'Freaky Styley' — the Chili Peppers' third record finally captures the band in full flight.

The album got off to an unpromising start. Producer Michael Beinhorn — who went on to work with Aerosmith, Marilyn Manson and Korn — was disgusted to learn that the band had only five songs completed in time for the sessions and instructed them to go away until there was an album to record. Beinhorn loved the same music as the band, anything from Jimi Hendrix to Stevie Wonder, and refused to indulge their laziness as he felt that with strong material he could translate the excitement of their shows onto record. Indeed, Beinhorn spent some time on the road with the band, and hung around for a month after the sessions had concluded mixing the album to his complete satisfaction.

For such a positive collection of songs, it's surprising to learn that the band were going through a deepening personal crisis, edging ever closer to splitting up due to the escalating heroin problems of Kiedis and Slovak. "It was kind of a gloomy time in our career," recalls Flea. "Drug use in the band was really beginning to make a morose stand. It began to seem ugly to me and not fun — our communication was not healthy. We slugged away."

Persevering through smack adversity, the band returned with enough material to keep Beinhorn happy, set up camp at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles and began the recording process. Of the 12 songs on offer, the teasingly titled 'Party On Your Pussy' — changed to 'Special Secret Song Inside' at the insistence of EMI — would cause the most consternation. In it, the singer expressed his desire to have a good time on his female listeners' private parts and irritated all but the band's most knuckle-headed fanbase.

"No Chump Love Sucker" ploughed a similarly ribald furrow, asking the question, 'How could I ever have kissed that bitch? So what if she's got big tits?' Best kept for the diary, at least.

FURTHER SEXUAL mischief is to be found on the dub-infused 'Love Trilogy', where Kiedis peels off smutty one-liners such as 'My love is getting skin on my flute'. Upon the single release of opening track 'Fight Like A Brave', the bawdy singer again couldn't resist stirring things up by claiming that while he was recording his vocals the rest of the band had pressed their scrotums flat against the studio window for 'inspiration'.

It's a shame that, at the time anyway, such homoerotic japey and priapic prose drew attention away from the music, as 'The Uplift Mofa Party Plan' is a masterfully executed album. Flea and Slovak deliver first-class performances, while Irons' jazz-tinged rock drumming drives heavy rivets into the likes of 'Funky Crime', a magnificently taut Chili Peppers moment.

The recurring theme of friendship and brotherly unity makes another appearance on this album in the guise of 'Me And My Friends' and 'Walking On Down The Road',

'The Uplift Mofa Party Plan' proved to be the last before the death of Hillel Slovak (far right)



the former a frantic punk funk workout which barely pauses for breath, the latter a looser, carefree groove. Elsewhere, 'Behind The Sun' is one of the album's most laid-back moments with trippy musings (complete with sitar) about a friendship with a talking dolphin, while the driving, pulsating mass-singalong 'Organic Anti-Beat Box

"We were as crazy as shit and on a highway to hell but we pulled it off." – Flea

Band' is an appropriate closer to a larger-than-life album.

"As it turns out, it's probably the most rockingest record we ever made," Flea reminisces. "We were as crazy as shit and on a highway to hell, but we pulled it off and made a record we are proud of. Nothing in the world could have stopped that love groove." Now the original band of brothers who finally had a great album under their belt, were dealt an agonising blow. 'The Uplift Mofa Party Plan' was to be guitarist Slovak's swan song. He was found dead of a heroin overdose in his Los Angeles apartment on June 25, 1988, a mere 10 months after the release of the album. "It was a severe slap in the face," said Kiedis, who struggled with heroin addiction alongside the guitarist. "It should have been me."

Drummer Jack Irons was hit particularly hard by Slovak's passing. He had been best friends with the Israel-born guitarist when they studied at Bancroft Junior High in the Fairfax district of LA. Irons began to resent the band's lifestyle and its macabre consequences. He became a recluse and was eventually admitted to hospital after suffering a mental breakdown.

With just the core of Kiedis and Flea left, the duo were stuck with the agonising decision to discontinue the band or embark on the tough task of finding replacements for their friends...



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Fight Like A Brave'

An inspiring call to all walks of life to take control and stand up to The Man, all set to Hillel Slovak's choppy riffs.

2 'Funky Crime'

An attitude-soaked, menacing slice of Chili Pepper magic. We're uncertain what constitutes a funky crime these days, but it would be fascinating to see how Nick Ross would reconstruct such a heinous, bass-fuelled misdemeanour.

3 'Me And My Friends'

A frantic Funkadelic-meets-Fear workout set to Kiedis' lyrical love for his bandmates and a flatmate called Bob Forrest. Apparently, Bob has 67 smells.

4 'Backwoods'

A tribute to the blues – namechecking Chuck Berry,

Howlin' Wolf etc – wrapped up in cock-waving sexual word-play.

5 'Skinny Sweaty Man'

A manic panic set to eccentric, acid-soaked 'Looney Tunes' imagery.

6 'Behind The Sun'

A sparkling Flea bass-line gives this hippy singalong some backbone. Talking dolphins, indeed.

7 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'

A bubbly bassline underpins their cover version of Bob Dylan's nasal-core political anthem.

8 'Special Secret Song Inside'

Now known again as 'Party On Your Pussy', this filthy number has since been tastefully deleted from the band's live repertoire.

9 'No Chump Love Sucker'

A furiously paced punk steamroller, where Kiedis seems to be getting a few things off his chest regarding an ex-girlfriend and drugs. Quite.

10 'Walkin' On Down The Road'

Loose, country-tinged groove about friendship.

11 'Love Trilogy'

An infectious, potent mixture of reggae, rock and rap. Kiedis boasts that his love is many things, including a 'Zulu groove' and 'pussy juice'.

12 'Organic Anti-Beat Box Band'

A potted history of the band-cum-mission statement. A rabble-raising and fitting end to such a rambunctious album.

CAUTION: GOONS CROSSING

Winning hearts and minds the Chili Peppers way – with naked buffoonery. An idea so good they did it two days running...

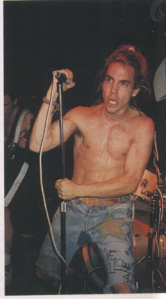
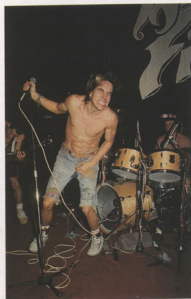
IN JANUARY 1988 the Red Hot Chili Peppers were hardly a sensation in the UK. Small venues such as London's Mean Fiddler were only half-filled and punters often didn't hang around long after hearing Anthony Kiedis' anti-British stage banter. It was something, he claims, done to get a reaction. "British music was very popular over here but I really rebelled against it – or at least pretended to," he said. "We had a really antagonistic attitude and relationship with the country. It was so much fun." In fact, during most of the small European tour the band found themselves playing to dwindling audiences.

Drug use was also beginning to become more than a diversion – Hillel Slovak would be dead just six months later. Understandably, then, EMI were beginning to get concerned about the band. Not only were they offending audiences, their personal lives were spiralling out of control and their albums were hardly flying off the shelves. That all with changed 'The Abbey Road EP'.

The five-track release was devised as a way of bolstering the band's flagging support, a chance to allow new fans to hear a sampler of the band's history. Containing only one new song, an explosive punk-funk cover of Jimi Hendrix's 'Fire', the EP did exactly the job it was supposed to. Sales of their back catalogue began to grow as people heard, for the first time, the EP's tracks: 'Catholic School Girls Rule' and 'Hollywood (Africa)' from 'Freaky Styley', 'Backwoods' from 'The Uplift Mofu Party Plan' and 'True Men Don't Kill Coyotes' from their debut, 'The Red Hot Chili Peppers'.

Sales, however, weren't spectacular and the EP failed to chart in England. In fact, the release may well have sunk without a

Abs fab: Kiedis giving it some at the Mean Fiddler, Harlesden, north London on January 30, 1988



trace were it not for the sleeve – a cheeky naked pastiche of The Beatles' 'Abbey Road'. This granted the band an instant notoriety, causing outrage and respect in equal measure – to come to England, the home of The Beatles, and rip the piss out of them was brave. Fortunately it paid off and European audiences found a new affection for the band, the previously fractious relationship wiped out by a single image of bozo japey. The concept was down to British photographer, Chris Clunn.

"They were signed to EMI at the time and had a new press officer who really wanted to do something impressive," he remembers. "EMI is associated with The Beatles and I put two and two together. It really didn't take a brain surgeon to come up with the concept. My other idea was to do the other classic Beatles shot where



You'll catch your death of cold without a hat, man at the back



they're all looking down the EMI staircase. We decided against that because they wouldn't be able to get their todgers out. The only certainty was that they were going to be naked – there was no point in doing the Abbey Road shoot if we weren't going to do it Chill Peppers-style."

THE SHOOT itself took place on a freezing cold morning in February, the day before the band was due back in America. "Next to Abbey Road studios there's a residential complex with a big bush in front of it," says Clunn. "They all nipped behind the bush and in about 15 minutes they were all stood out on the road, naked with socks on their willies. There was quite a bit of traffic and the people in cars were all amazed at what was going on – getting naked in Central London just isn't something you do, let alone on a cold winter morning.

"It was the first sleeve picture I'd ever taken and I was a bit nervous. I had two cameras – one black and white, one colour. I could finish a roll of film in about 40 seconds so it should've been very quick. It was only

"It was only when I got back home that I realised I hadn't put any film in the cameras." – CHRIS CLUNN, PHOTOGRAPHER

when I got back home that I realised I hadn't put any film in the cameras."

Clunn quickly concocted a story, telling the record company that the films had fallen out of his pocket and been run over by a lorry.

"I actually got two new films and rode over them on a scooter as evidence. I got a

phone call about half six the following morning asking me to do it again. They were on their way to the airport and stopped to do it again. It was like déjà vu – they jumped out of the minibus and

we were finished in 10 minutes.

"They were really friendly people, especially Anthony and Flea, they couldn't do enough to help you. I didn't see any evi-

dence of drugs at that time but that doesn't mean they weren't doing them – if they did, they made sure it was out of sight.

"The EP didn't have a name until I did the shoot, then it just seemed natural to call it 'The Abbey Road EP'. Fortunately, both the band and EMI bought the story. I've never had the nerve to admit it before."

[HILLEL SLOVAK]

To Live And Die In LA

With the band on the brink of success at long last, guitarist Hillel Slovak was found dead of a heroin overdose. It could have been the end of the Chili Peppers. It was just the beginning...

During the first half of 1988 the Red Hot Chili Peppers were losing it. While the release of their third album *The Uplift Mofo Party Plan* the previous December had at least started to garner them recognition beyond the bars and strip joints of Hollywood, the Chilis themselves were far too concerned about the business of behaving like rock stars than actually being them.

It was during this time — at their first taste of fame — that Anthony Kiedis and Hillel Slovak began to embrace heroin with open arms, that bassist Flea started trying to wrestle overall control of the band from his best friend Kiedis, and that all the hard work they had each put into getting the band off the ground began to unravel. It was during this period that, suddenly, the parties seemed a lot more interesting than the music.

It's a common enough story among bands who are beginning to make it: succumbing to the lifestyle, the alcohol and the drugs, believing your own hype, the bullshit spouted at you to push you harder, to do one more tour, one more gig, one more interview. The Chilis claimed they loved it, they revelled in their reputation as the hardest working band on the planet but it was always going to take its toll. Inevitably there was going to be a casualty — the only question was which member would crack first. It was Hillel Slovak, who died from an overdose on June 25, aged 26.

When Slovak was found twisted on the floor of his Hollywood apartment, two days later, it was almost the end for the Chilis. Initially it was impossible for them to consider how to continue, how to put behind them the

death of their close friend and make another album.

It was also touch and go as to whether Kiedis would ever be able to kick his own habit. In fact, it's a miracle the Red Hot Chili Peppers survived 1988 at all.

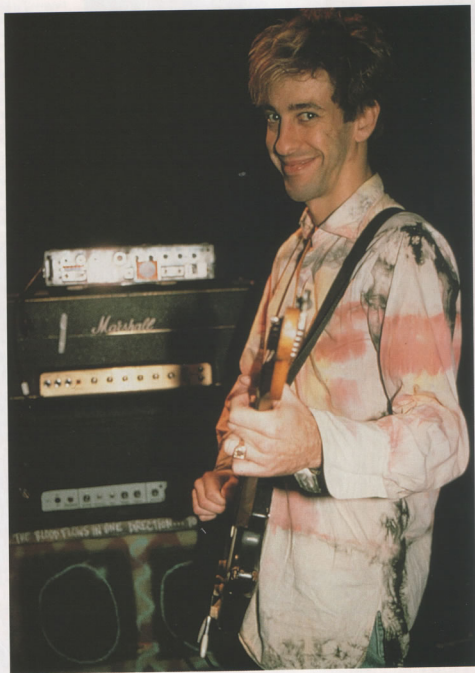
THE BEGINNING of the year had promised so much for the band. They had been on a short European tour to promote their third album and, while the critics and fans had hardly been exuberant in their embrace of the band, there was definitely a hint of buzz in the air.

Capitalising on this, their record label EMI had rushed out an EP — *The Abbey Road EP* — to boost their profile. It didn't set the charts alight but it did mean that people beyond Hollywood at last began to know who they were.

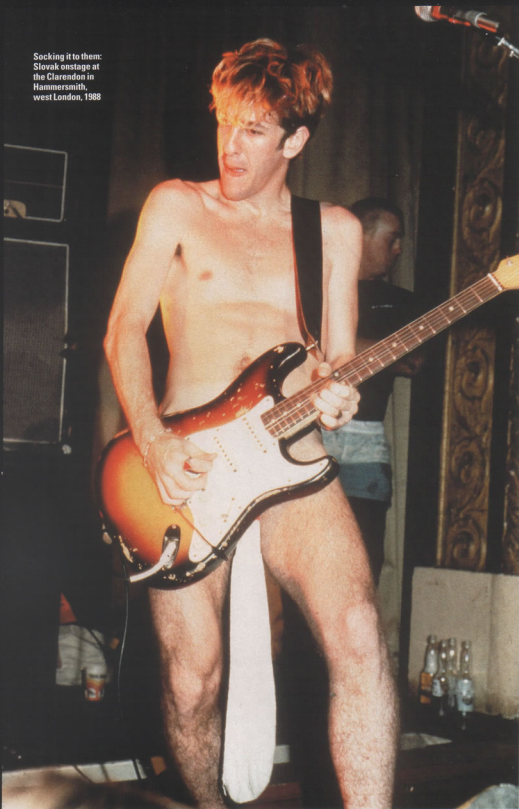
It was on this tour that things started to go awry. It was in England that Slovak's reputation as a party animal began to catch up with him. Photographer Chris Clunn, who followed the tour's UK leg, noticed that, Hillel was having problems, he looked tired. During the show at the Mean Fiddler he just left the stage. He put down his guitar and walked off, the rest of the band had to carry on as though nothing had happened.

It was the beginning of Slovak's demise. From then on he would walk off during shows with an alarming regularity, lying backstage watching his band play, unable to contribute. Often when he was onstage he would be distracted, his guitar out of tune and out of time. Sometimes he wouldn't even make it to the venue in the first place, preferring to simply disappear, wandering around whichever city they happened to be playing in that night, unwilling to even acknowledge the existence of his own band.

Partying had always been central to the Red Hot Chili Peppers' ethos. From the earliest days when, in Kiedis words, they were just four motherf**kers from Fairfax, ►



Soaking it to them: Slovak onstage at the Clarendon in Hammersmith, west London, 1988



"I was so familiar with the nature of addiction that I knew that Hillel was in as deep as me." Anthony

The four original Chills – Kiedis, Flea, Slovak and drummer Jack Irons – would hang around outside Hollywood clubs as soon as they graduated from high school. They might not have been cool enough to gain entry – to see the likes of Black Flag and The Germs – but they were sufficiently on the ball to know where the parties were. Eventually they managed to get it together and play their first 'gig' at a club opening. They were armed with only

one song and billed as Tony Flow And The Miraculously Majestic Masters Of Mayhem, but they filled their heads with acid and played. From that moment on, the bond between their music and drugs was secured.

On tour, Kiedis admits that they found it "exciting and challenging to sleep with different girls in every town and get absolutely annihilated drinking alcohol in every town and crash cars in every town. That all made

sense." Flea would also admit that drugs began to claim more and more significance in their lives. "We did drugs from a very young age and it just started to kind of steamroll."

The problem was that, for Flea, drugs meant acid and weed. It meant simply going out and having a party, it was a means to exuberance. For Kiedis and Slovak, however, drugs meant heroin and a way to block out the pressures of being onstage every night. The pair began to spiral ever deeper into drug abuse, much to Flea and Irons' disgust.

Kiedis and Slovak were very different in their use of heroin. Kiedis was completely open about it, scoring in front of his bandmates, letting everyone know exactly where he bought his drugs – later he would be even more explicit about this in the song "Under The Bridge". Slovak was far more secretive and many were shocked when they discovered he was a user. In fact, it was only when Kiedis spotted the same patterns of behaviour in Slovak that he knew in himself that he realised how addicted the guitarist was.

"I became so familiar with the nature of addiction that I knew Hillel was in as deep as me," he told biographer Dave Thompson. "He was just more in denial. Hillel thought he had power over the dark side."

THEIR REPUTATIONS reputations went before them. Soon every dealer would know when the band was in town and, armed with backstage passes, would compete to sell to them that night. Photographer Chris Clunn remembers that, "They partied a lot but it was because they played so much. You could guarantee that they had a gig almost every night and, afterwards, they naturally wanted to let their hair down. They ended up in a lot of strip clubs because they were the only places around at the end of night."

To band insiders it was Kiedis who was causing more concern. His openness about his usage meant that it was all too visible to those close to him. "They were all afraid I was going to die," he claimed. "I would just take too much, too often and for too long a period of time."

Slovak's problems, however, were kept away from anyone else. Roadie Robbie Allen remembers that, "With Hillel you saw strange things at first like mood swings, him going missing for a few days and his bandmates getting grouchy. I was 17 and had never seen the effects of heroin addiction. The band knew and were trying to help, but of course Anthony was struggling himself."

The problem was the band's relentless touring schedule. All the roadwork allowed no time for anyone to try and help the singer to clean up. That Kiedis was probably the only person who knew quite how much trouble Slovak was in, was also just as deeply hooked, was far worse.

Being in a touring band is not the easiest place to try and quit a serious drug habit. Each town is lonelier than the last; each gig provides another dealer eager to sell to bands because, as every dealer knows,

bands pay more than anyone else. The buzz surrounding the Chili Peppers at this time was as great as it had ever been in their careers. While 'The Uplift Mofu Party Plan' would never rival their later successes, in just two months it had sold twice as much as their first two releases had. Managers, label and fans were expecting great things from their fourth album, and the success of 'The Abbey Road EP' only added to the pressure.

For Kiedis this anticipation was a good thing. Knowing that he would be expected to deliver by summer helped keep him together, helped him at least attempt to control his drug use, to harness the murkier feelings it produced. It had, however, taken a serious toll on relationships within the band.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers, everyone assumed, had always been the product of dual control. Duties seemed to be split evenly between the charisma and determination of Kiedis and the excitement and musicality of Flea. But Flea was increasingly sickened by his friend's drug use and attempted to wrest

Funky hunks: in 1988, the year Slovak (second left) died



Anthony feels the aphrodisiac power of oysters in New Orleans, 1987

Felix's
RESTAURANT
OYSTERS



Photos: Joe Huges, Netma, Chris Clunn

control from Kiedis, citing the singer's unreliability. It was perhaps this that caused Kiedis to never entirely give in to his habit, the fact that he knew he could lose his band drove him to distraction and to frequent shouting matches with the bassist.

For Slovak, there were no such qualms. As far as he was concerned, he was simply the guitar player in the band. He was also sure he could never be fired – these had been his friends since high school after all. But he started to become a major problem.

Kiedis was the first to notice and, because he alone knew the state that Slovak was in, attempted to get through to him. But rather than talk to his friend, he decided the best way to communicate was through letters and notes.

"It was real hard for me to tell him how much I loved him," Kiedis told Dave Thompson. "I'd write things like, 'We've got to be clean. We've got the Red Hot Chili Peppers in common, we've got our friendship in common, we grew up together, we love each other. I want to spend my life with you making music'."

None of those letters worked and Kiedis still talks today with pain and regret that he never really confronted his friend and told him any of this face to face. The inevitable happened. On June 27, 1988, Hillel Slovak was found dead in his apartment. He was 26 and had been dead two days. He had gone out to score one Saturday night, returned home alone and shot up. He fell into a coma and died. It wasn't until a worried friend dropped by that he was found.

The band was told immediately but, tellingly, when Flea was informed there was some very bad news, he assumed it was Kiedis who had died. For Kiedis, although tragic, it was the wake-up call he needed. "It was a severe slap in the face," he says. "It should have been me."

It was Jack Irons who took Slovak's death the hardest. Much as Kiedis and Flea were best friends, so were Irons and Slovak. He blamed the band and, more specifically, Kiedis for the death of his friend. He tried to disappear, refusing to answer any calls from anyone connected with the Red Hot Chili Peppers before eventually suffering a breakdown, quitting the band and being admitted to a mental hospital.

Technically, the Red Hot Chili Peppers were over. Their guitarist had died, their drummer was institutionalised, their singer was in the throes of an addiction he couldn't shake. The only member still standing was Flea. Tour manager Louis Mathieu remembers it being an impossible time.

"I was not in town for the immediate aftermath," he says, "but I remember the feeling after I got back. Then Jackie departed... it doesn't get much lower than losing a brother and having your best high school friend be so bereft that he's forced to retire from the band. It was a really sad time."

Slovak's funeral was on June 30. As soon as it finished Kiedis packed a bag and



Axe attack: biting wood, circa 1988

drove south. By his account he lived in a tiny hut on a beach, entirely secluded from everyone he knew and away from the LA parties he knew would be impossible to avoid. He says he used to walk, fish or do anything to avoid going near drugs again. He returned on August 1 to meet up with Flea, clean and ready to work out whether there was any future in the Red Hot Chili Peppers. As Flea put it, "Anthony has always been the man of P***king steel."

"We had to bear down, change our lifestyles and look at what was important to

that had driven the band. It was his innate understanding of exactly the right blend of punk and funk that had brought the group the relatively little attention they had. Also, as everyone in the band had always been keen to enforce, the Chili Peppers were a gang, the "four motherf***ers from Fairfax". A replacement was never going to be easy.

At first they turned to ex-Dead Kennedys drummer DH Peligro and former Funkadelic guitarist Duane "Blackbyrd" McKnight. It was short-lived. Both Flea and Kiedis realised they had no shared bond with these hired

Replacing Jack Irons was much harder. It was only after 30 auditions that Chad Smith walked in. The long-haired drummer didn't know a single Chili Peppers song and told them he only liked metal. It worked, though.

"We told him to shave his head and he was in the band," said Kiedis. "He said, 'No!' and we thought that was even more punk than being pushed around by a bunch of arseholes like us."

Once again Kiedis and Flea had their gang, a bond of musicality, insular-looking brothers who would stand up for each other.

They also had a guitarist who would change the fortunes of the band forever, one who instinctively knew exactly what he had to do. Again the music began to flow, so

"Hillel dying helped sharpen the focus of the band. We wanted to prove that what we did was worthy." Flea

us," Kiedis told Thompson. "Things like friendship, love, making great music and not getting sidetracked by the more negative influences in life. Losing your best friend at the age of 26 is a mind and soul blower. There was definitely an inspiration which came from Hillel dying, which helped sharpen the focus of the band. We tried to use our loss as a bolstering, positive influence – if nothing else, to prove to the world what we were doing was worthy and legitimate. Hillel may be dead; we're not."

After deciding to carry on, Flea and Kiedis had to create another family they felt could replace two of their oldest friends. It was a difficult process. While the band had always been Kiedis's or Flea's, it was Slovak's guitar

hands, there was no history, no gang mentality. Within a matter of weeks they were back to square one.

PELIGRO HAD, though, introduced them to a guitarist – then playing with a band called Thelouious Monster. His name was John Frusciante and he would save the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Born in New York and eight years younger than both Flea and Kiedis, Frusciante had first discovered the Chili Peppers at LA's Variety Arts Center when he was 15; they fast became his favourite band. Three years later he was asked to join. "There were boot marks five feet high on the wall in my room for months after that call," said the new guitarist.

much so that when they were ready to begin recording again, the ease with which the songs were put together was like nothing Kiedis and Flea had seen before.

The results were extraordinary as well – three brilliant singles: "Knock Me Down" (a tribute to Slovak), "Taste The Pain" and a cover of Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground" began to show a band back on the rise. Next came the album, "Mother's Milk" in 1989. When that record went platinum the future of the Red Hot Chili Peppers was secure, their right to exist, to battle through and to survive confirmed.

Before Hillel Slovak's death, the band had been perched on many brinks. In their eyes, and those of the fans, they were on the brink

[HILLEL SLOVAK]

of greatness, a record away from the success that should have been the reward for their hard touring. For other observers they were on the brink of imploding, descending like so many bands before them into an acrimonious split fuelled by internal arguments and the destructive drug habits of their iconic frontman and loose-cannon guitar player.

Though Slovak's death was a tragic loss it really should have come as no surprise to anyone. That no one in the band seemed to be able to find the time to help him was as awful as it was unavoidable. Simply, the strains of playing and partying virtually every night for

two years were too much to bear. In fact, the only time Kiedis did try and get his friend to seek professional help was when, bizarrely, he tried to encourage him to an Alcoholics – rather than Narcotics – Anonymous group. Slovak turned him down, justifiably pointing out that he wasn't an alcoholic.

What it did mean was that they were forced to look into themselves, to dig deep and dredge up the memories of why they got started in the first place. The point had always been to make music, to change lives and to become one of the biggest bands in the world – there had always been a vast ambition, notably in Kiedis and Flea. Slovak's

death forced the issue and led to the band finding Frusciante who was as vital in the Chili Pepper's success as anyone.

Poignantly, Slovak's death also led to the Chili Peppers' biggest song – 'Under The Bridge'. Kiedis says he wrote it while sitting in his car one day. An unbearable loneliness took over him, a fearsome terror. He said he felt just as Slovak must have done before he died – depressed, frightened and horribly alone. As Kiedis had realised, Slovak's death meant a new beginning.

"We changed our entire attitudes," he said. "We decided, 'Here's something we started a long time ago that we haven't finished.'" ●

Now Flea was wearing the trousers: the Chili Peppers, 1989



Photos: Clements/Sikken/Wetno, Bernard/Kufemstorf/Reina

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Slovak overdosed, Irons scarpred and the Chili Peppers were barely hanging on to their record deal. The omens were not good. But the album certainly was.

MOTHER'S MILK 1989, EMI



UNDERNEATH THE painting of a naked woman reclining on the back cover of 'Mother's Milk' is a small inscription to the man who painted it: "This album is dedicated to the memory of Hillel Slovak". It's the sole reference to the miserable circumstances that surrounded an album more often-referenced as a highly influential, up-tempo collection of groovy rock experimentation, and perhaps a reminder that once upon a time, it was in fact, highly *unfashionable* to frown in rock – however much you had to frown about. And by rights, 'Mother's Milk' should have found the Chili's' mouths down by their ankles. Indeed, this seemed less like a band poised to become one of the forerunners in the alternative music revolution and closer to one on its last legs.

Gripped by drug addiction and still reeling from the loss of Slovak and then-drummer Jack Irons to a nervous breakdown – both childhood friends as well as bandmates – Anthony Kiedis and Flea were faced with recording the follow-up to 'The Uplift Mofa Party Plan' with a brand new line-up. They added young unknown John Frusciante on guitar and metalhead Chad Smith – a drummer whose penchant for tight denim shorts was matched only by an alarming lack of familiarity with the band's previous material. The only good news was that the previous album's showing on the 'Billboard' chart (placed at 148 upon release – an unmitigated disaster by today's standards) was enough then to convince EMI to bankroll another venture.

Yet 'Mother's Milk' was the sound of a band – perversely, given the freshness of the line-up – that had finally found its feet. Technically and artistically it was their greatest triumph to date. Such are the twisted designs of fate.

Opener 'Good Time Boys' might have been the most obvious hangover from the funk metal stylings of 'Uplift...', but the Chili's proved to be far more skilled fusioners than such a crude tag allowed. Their colourful net of reference had always

included '60s soul, '70s funk and '80s punk and metal, but this time the mix was far more focused and far more potent than previous efforts. Rather than upset the chemistry, the newcomers seemed to augment it, providing it with a devastating, vital edge. In Frusciante they had a talent of incredible dexterity and innovation to match the nimble-fingered cyclone of Flea, as happy bringing fuel-injected psychosis to their cover of Stevie Wonder's 'Higher Ground' as he was tearing through 'Nobody Weird Like Me's' lunatic medley; while Smith pounded through Hendrix's 'Fire' as though it had been written for him.

STYLISTICALLY, THERE was a new depth as well. You might hesitate to use the word 'maturity' – 'Sexy Mexican Maid' and 'Stone Cold Bush' were familiar exercises in bawdy funk that suggested it would be a long time, if ever, before Anthony Kiedis would tire of titty ditties – but 'Mother's Milk' had a heavier weight of experience to relate than its hedonistic predecessors.

Death, addiction and paranoia were the among the main forces here – although Kiedis' ruminations on such matters were strikingly and crucially different from the hordes of nu-metalers who would later use his band's infectious grooves as a sound-

Got milk? Even a charging bull elephant bores Flea



board for misery; 'Mother's Milk' was an album informed by the pain of loss, chemical dependency and the state of the world, but never ruled by them.

Hence tirades against the corporate stranglehold of The Man were short, sharp bursts of corrosive fun ('Punk Rock Classic'), the torments of heroin withdrawal found themselves turned into a Twilight

A celebration of cross-pollination madness that could go the distance and create a platinum seller.

Zone spook-rock delight ('Taste The Pain') while even their tribute to the departed Slovak ('Knock Me Down') side-stepped sentimentality for an upbeat empowerment anthem about personal responsibility. It was only the pummeling, atonal funk workout of 'Johnny, Kick A Hole In The Sky', filled with paranoia about a Bush-controlled America (how things change) that dampened the mood with its ominous sign-off.

But then that was part of the appeal. Not as wilfully eclectic as fellow funkateers Fishbone, and a far sexier proposition than the geek-noodelings of Primus, 'Mother's Milk' fit perfectly into the new landscape being forged by the psychedelic mantras of Jane's Addiction and the twisted cynicism of Faith No More that was beginning to make exciting and unpredictable rock music a commercial possibility at last. A celebration of cross-pollination madness that could go the distance, it had enough off-kilter mutations for the college rock crowd, enough bursts of adrenaline for the moshpit, enough low-end elasticity for the groovers and shakers – enough in fact, to create a platinum-selling album.

Of course, while 'Mother's Milk' was where they found their feet, it was the album that came next where they truly made their mark. But it's worth remembering – and perhaps all the labels that are shaking their heads in confusion at dismay today at the diminishing returns of their one-hit, high-maintenance rock 'stars' should take note of this – this was the fourth album by a band six years into a career, whose previous effort had barely scraped into the charts, and who found themselves half a band down at the start of recording it. It was a big ask, and one the Chili Peppers refused to shy away from.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Good Time Boys'

A rap-rock statement of intent lifted by lithe funk licks and schizoid style shifts that kick-starts the party.

2 'Higher Ground'

Super-kinetic version of the Stevie Wonder classic that degenerates into a speedcore meltdown finale.

3 'Subway To Venus'

Frisky, innuendo-laden booty shaker. Tunnels and trains, anyone?

4 'Magic Johnson'

Tongue-twisting rhymes set to a machine gun rap in a tribute to the famed basketball ace. "Johnson" also an Americanism for penis.

5 'Nobody Weird Like Me'

Vocoders, hyperspeed bass, fitful guitars and, er, encounters with giraffes – seemingly everything was thrown into this gonzo metal

mutation that indicated the band were indeed as the title suggests.

6 'Knock Me Down'

Surprisingly upbeat pop melodies frame this memorial to Hillel Slovak.

7 'Taste The Pain'

Tripped-out tones meet spooked guitar wah-wah and a disembodied horn section that sees the Chili's at their most experimental.

8 'Stone Cold Bush'

Another booty shakin' lady celebration complete with porno samples.

9 'Fire'

Frantic resurrection of the Jimi Hendrix number complete with hurricane drum action.

10 'Pretty Little Ditty'

A moment of instrumental calm

amid the psychosis as the gentle lull of Frusciantie's guitar builds to Flea's trumpet-fueled crescendo.

11 'Punk Rock Classic'

Amphetamine guitar and rough-house rhythms whip this caustic paean to MTV video muppets and magazine cover clones to the finish line in 1:47 flat.

12 'Sexy Mexican Maid'

A slo-grind slink with the drrrrriest of sax solos forms the perfect soundboard for Kiedis' ode to getting down with a raven-haired lovely from south of the border.

13 'Johnny, Kick A Hole In The Sky'

A super-elastic low-end action that never lets up provides the driving backbone for this melody-free state-of-the-world address – a surprisingly edgy end to the party.

Mister Muscle

L Shortly after the release of 'Mother's Milk', Kerrang! met up with Anthony Kiedis in LA. Poised on the edge of worldwide success, the singer had one thing on his mind – his contentious 'sex diet'.

Los Angeles, 1990, was the perfect time and place to meet the Red Hot Chili Peppers. They were the face of the future. That they chose to combine rock and funk was hardly original, but the way in which the Chilis did it was. In an era of hair-teased, MTV-motivated, money-worshipping mindlessness, the Chilis stood out like a beacon. When they came along, it suddenly seemed there might be more than just shite at the end of the tunnel. The Chilis refused to conform, and actually set themselves as hard against the grain as they could go.

Often, that led to trouble. But instead of deterring them, the Chili Peppers just seemed inspired by the blustering reactions their then only semi-famous presence could provoke. When they performed live on a Jonathan Ross TV show a few weeks before, Flea had dangled upside down from a rope during the performance, and Kiedis had startled Ross by bounding over his desk and running amok among the audience.

In person, they were no less mood-enhancing. At the photo session which followed this interview, Flea leapt from the third-floor balcony and hung from it by his fingertips then decided "this is boring – we need something else". Anthony had driven me there in an old jalopy he'd had for years and which, "doesn't go right unless I drive at top speed". You might say that he and his band approached life the same way...

WHEN HE appears in the doorway, I'm immediately struck by how small he is. Onstage with the Red Hot Chili Peppers,

Anthony Kiedis looks like one of those classical Greek statues: large, muscle-bound, big willy dangling. But in person, the singer with the original 'hardcore, psychedelic, sex-funk band from heaven' looks much more manageable. Five feet eight, long straight tea-coloured hair, looking younger than his 27 years. Dressed in shorts, T-shirt and sneakers. Still with the big fluscular arms, though.

As for the willy? Well, he never showed it to me, which is a shame. If he had, I might have sued him and made some money out of it. He explains how a similar situation came about...

"It was backstage after a show and I was changing, and there was a girl there. We were all joking together, and when she left no one was under the impression that she was perturbed by my nudity in the dressing room."

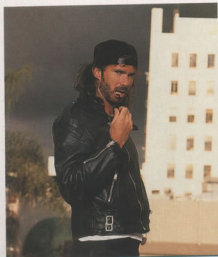
Within 24 hours, however, the girl, a student at the George Mason University in Virginia, had sworn out a complaint and Kiedis was tried and convicted on misdemeanor charges of 'sexual battery'. He was fined \$1,000 on each count. He paid the fine for indecent exposure, but is appealing against the sexual battery charge. The girl claimed Kiedis had dangled his dick in her face. Had he?

"No," he says sharply. "I'm not that type of person. I'm a very fun-loving, friendly person. The fact that I was guilty of misdemeanors and given a nominal fine pretty much indicated to my attorney and to hers that it was a pile of shite."

Unlike the singing voice, which has ▶

Mouth almighty: Anthony Kiedis shows the statue in stick-in-the-it's-not-me-out





Plenty of room on top (anti-clockwise from top left): Chad Smith, John Frusciante, Flea – and the whole band goof around on the roof of Kerrang!'s LA hotel, June 1990

rapped and yapped its way through four albums with the Chilis, the speaking voice is even-tempered, almost monotonous, or would be if what he had to say wasn't so interesting. We meet on an typical Los Angeles day: it's pissing with rain.

"I love the rain," Kiedis tells me. "It's very important to LA; the air pollution is so deadly here that without rain we would die. So, you know, we're lucky to have rain today."

We digress to discuss the environment. Kiedis says it needs all the help it can get. I don't argue. Then the conversation steers itself back to safer ground: more sex crimes.

In March, performing during MTV's spring-break party at Daytona Beach, Florida, Flea and Chad Smith, were arrested after they had leapt off stage to much commotion, and the bassist allegedly threw a young woman over his shoulder while Smith spanked her. Both face charges for battery, with Flea facing additional charges or 'disorderly conduct' and 'solicitation to commit an unnatural and lascivious act'. Kiedis remains tight-lipped on the subject. It's clear he thinks the whole thing has been blown out of all proportion. Maybe if it had been solely a Chilis gig instead of a variety show, the girl would have understood...

"Most people who come to our shows understand that there's a humour element to what we do, and it's not necessarily intended to offend anyone," Kiedis says. "The first amendment of the American constitution gives the freedom of speech and the freedom, you know, to do what you will from the stage."

Tell that to governor of the State of Minnesota, who is trying to introduce an over-21 law for all major league concerts in the state.

"That's a terrible concept," says Kiedis. "I hope they fail miserably. Creativity has always been threatened by certain right-wing

comfortable with the decision and denies any implications of selling out.

"The art of the Red Hot Chili Peppers is first and foremost that of our music, and we never change our music as a compromise for anybody's desires or tastes. That we should have to enlarge ourselves on the record is not really that big a deal. It's what's inside that counts. These things are so arbitrary, anyway. Nobody kicked up any fuss over our T-shirts..."

The two most notable shirts being the legendary photo of the band with socks on their cocks and one that has a picture of a woman masturbating.

"It's a drawing of Madonna masturbating and she's dreaming of the Red Hot Chili Peppers," Kiedis explains with a straight face. "I think if she saw it, she'd want one – that's the type of girl she is. I mean, I don't think Madonna's ever denied masturbating. Or denied masturbating to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, for that matter."

WHAT ABOUT the serious side of the Chilis, though? Does it concern Kiedis that some people might not be able to see past the silly faces in their photos, the smutty T-shirts, the whole zany, crazy jive?

"But that's like people going to see Jimi Hendrix play and coming away with nothing more to say than, 'Wow, that guy can play with his teeth!'," he says.

"This is showbusiness, and we are here to entertain. The visual side of it is there, but there's a lot more to it than that. People who are truly interested will find that out eventually."

On the other hand of course, some people take the Chilis almost too seriously. To the point of actually wanting to be them. Faith No More's Mike Patton, for instance.

I ask Kiedis for his opinion on the matter: did Patton rip you off hook, line and sinker, or what?

"Yeah," he says, with no hesitation. "My

The only exercise i



factions of society. But they've never succeeded and I don't see why they should now."

Nevertheless, the last Chilis album, 'Mother's Milk', came complete with 'Explicit Language' stickers plastered on its sleeve. [The practice was rare at that time]

"That doesn't bother me," he says. "Our lyrics are very explicit, whether it's about sex or friendship, or love for life in general. If they wanna inform the public that it's explicit, I have no problems."

However, when a certain large chain of American stores wanted to buy 50,000 copies of the album, they balked when they saw the sleeve and so the band's record company got around the problem by redesigning the sleeve to make the image of the Chilis bigger, in order to obscure more of 'Mother's' breasts. Kiedis says he is

drummer says he's gonna kidnap him, shave his hair off and saw off one of his feet. Just so he'll be forced to find a style of his own.

"It used to really bother me. I thought, 'What a drag if people get the idea that I'm actually ripping him off!'. But after it stewed in my stomach for a while, I just decided to accept it. He is just a kid. Besides, without his left foot he's going to have to change..."

In America the Chilis have just received a gold disc for 'Mother's Milk'. It is only now that they've started to make any serious inroads into the British or European markets.

How important is it for the band to be a success this side of the Atlantic?

"Everywhere we go in the world we play our hardest every night we play. That's basically what we have to offer Britain. It's

nice to expose what you have to offer to the entire world."

Do the Chili Peppers like it in the UK?

"To be blatantly honest, England is not our favourite place to go. It isn't because we're not as well-known as we are in America; it's the weather we don't like, and it's very far away, and the food's not very good – they tend to overcook the vegetables." He adopts a teasing, bitter English accent: "Y'know, steak'n'kidney pie is not really me favourite..."

"Sooner or later, though, it's inevitable that we will conquer England, as well as Scotland, Ireland and the rest of the world."

"It's very much like the long-term process of making love to somebody: you start off with the foreplay, you kiss them and you suck their neck and you titillate their sensory areas with your fingertips, with the first couple of records. Maybe you start giving them head with the third record, then you finally slip it in for the fourth. That's essentially what we've done with our career up to this point."

"Mother's Milk" was incredibly well received in America. Basically, we're still involved in the foreplay section of the rest of the world, since they didn't really get our first two records."

IT ALL comes back to sex with Kiedis.

Almost as soon as we met, he told me he was on a 'sex diet'. And he had the love bites – one either side of the jugular – to prove it.

"I've got a new girlfriend. She's 18 and demands rigorous sexual activity several times a day."

Kiedis' sex diet consists of "no fattening foods, lots of protein, and a lot of exercise before you eat".

How does that work, in practice?

"Basically, you just can't afford to have an ounce of fat because a sexual diet is for performance. But, it's also for aesthetics:



ever get is sex... ANTHONY KIEDIS

she's a model and she's perfect in her physical structure."

So is this love, Anthony?

"Love is a word taken much too seriously sometimes," he says enigmatically. "People are afraid to say they love somebody, but the fact is I do love her. I'm not gonna marry her and I'm not gonna dedicate my whole life to her, because I need to devote time to myself and my music."

"But she understands. I just broke up with a girl that I lived with for two years. To get out of the frying pan and go straight into the fire would be stupid right now. But I do love her. She's the biggest sexual genius I've encountered in the last 10 years..."

When he's not devouring his new girlfriend, Kiedis says he likes to spend his spare time reading (Charles Bukowski is a

big influence) and listening to music ('Sex Packets' by the Digital Underground is a current favourite). But mostly, he has sex.

"The only exercise I ever get, unless I force myself to do push-ups, is sex and onstage. Onstage is the cardiovascular scenario: you know, an hour-and-a-half running around every night. And sex. You'd be surprised. I mean, you're holding yourself up above a girl any length of time. You know, utilising your penis or whatever."

He strikes a post-coital pose and lights a cigarette. Smoking is his one remaining vice.

"My guitar player [John Frusciante] is such an avid smoker, and he really love the quality it gives my voice, the raspiness."

Once upon a time, of course, smoking a cigarette was the least of Kiedis' problems. Heroin abuse and alcoholism had both

threatened to take him over. Then his guitarist, friend and co-conspirator in the twilight world of drug addiction, Hillel Slovak, died. "Like me, Hillel had the disease of drug addiction," says Kiedis. "He didn't die of an overdose – he died from having a disease."

"No one wanted to accept that this young man with so much to offer was just wiped out in second. But in a strange way, we found strength from that. It forced me to make a choice. I could either join Hillel, or I could try to finish my life."

"I've been completely off all alcohol and all drugs for 21 months now. I mean, completely. I don't drink or use any more. But I don't do it by myself. Hillel tried to do it by himself and he died. I do it with the help of other addicts that have cleaned up. That's the only way I know how to deal with it." ●

ANTHONY KIEDIS

VOCALIST, 1983-PRESENT

THE 41-YEAR-OLD,

5' 10" Scorpio Anthony is one of the world's most eligible bachelors. A vegetarian, whose interests include art collecting, surfing and world travel, Anthony is self-employed and financially solvent. Blessed with an artistic temperament, boyish good looks and bags of confidence, he has put years of heroin addiction behind him, and is looking forward to settling down and raising children with his perfect match.

CHILDHOOD "From age 11 to 16, my father and I lived together like brothers, which was really beautiful – but it was also very sad. A lot of things happened during that time that would be major contributors to the illnesses and psychotic episodes of my young adult life."

EARLY DAYS "What we set out to do initially was to be the complete and utter perpetrators of

"I miss the blustery naïveté of young Anthony. Life's cooler when you don't know any better."

hard-core, bone-crunching, mayhem – sex-thugs from heaven."

SONGWRITING "Sometimes I just have to listen to the music and start writing and the lyrics will be there. But at other times it's painful and methodical, like figuring out your next move in a chess game."

FAME "It feels funny having a lot of people screaming at you and wanting to take your picture. I could take it or leave it."

WOMEN "Like so many millions of other men on this planet, I love women. I love their essence

and they way they think and the way they talk and the way they move and the way they feel. I don't think that's terribly unusual. Yes, I have a strong appreciation for women. But that doesn't mean I'm a womaniser."

SEX "I didn't grow up with any sexual shyness or sense of sexual taboo. Sex is a simple and natural function of life, and to deny it, or be afraid of it, or to hide from it is something that ends up causing psychological ailments."

DRUGS "Drug addiction is a bizarre and cunning enemy and it doesn't really plug into logical reason. You can't just go, 'Okay, this is bad, this kills, this hurts people and makes life miserable' when you're in the throes of it."

LOS ANGELES "Los Angeles is a part of me. This is where I got turned on to the magic of life

and music and sex and drugs and movies and all the friends that I'll be with for the rest of my life. It's the greatest place in the world."

ROCK'N'ROLL "Being in a band has kept me youthful at heart. It's mental and emotional exercise as well as physical."

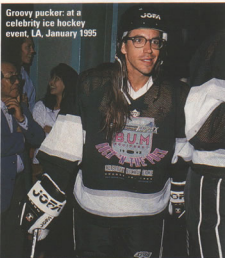
GROWING UP "I kind of miss the blustery naïveté of young Anthony. I love that guy. Sometimes life's so much cooler when you just don't know any

better and all the painful lessons have not hammered your head open yet."

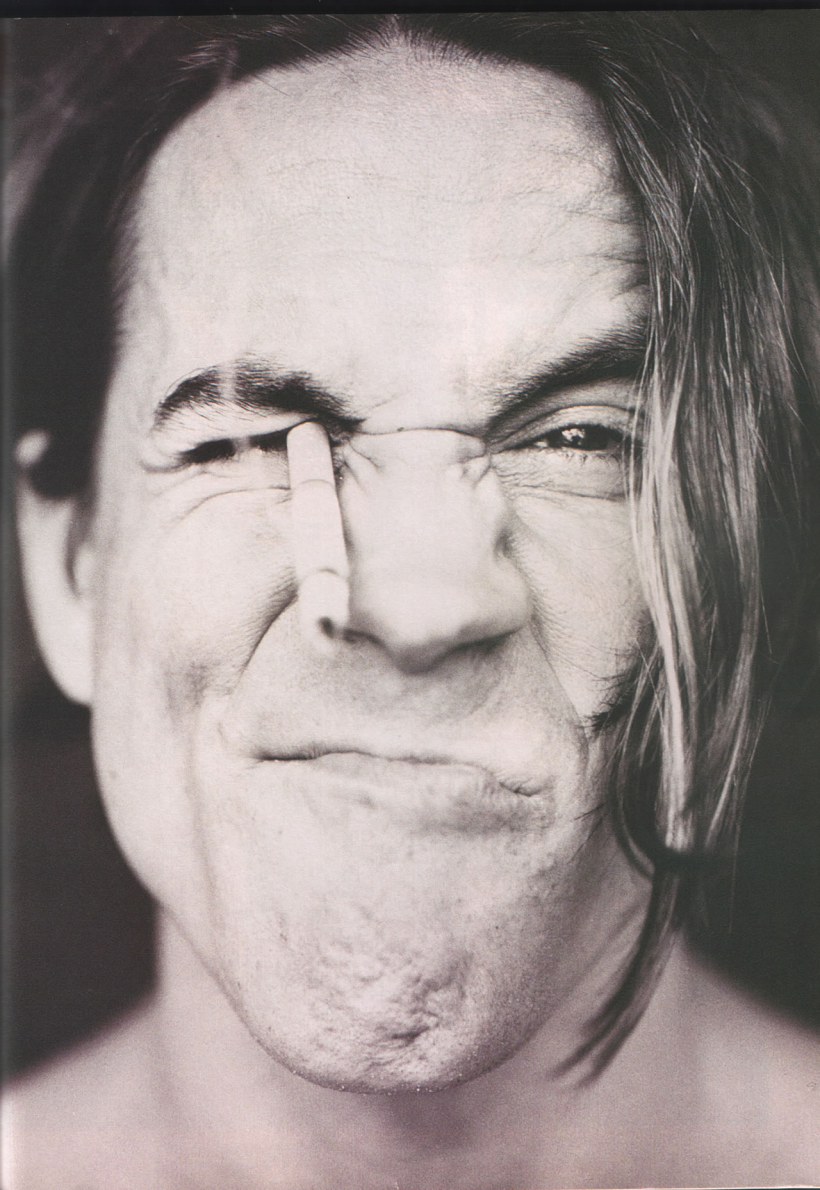
THE FUTURE "Life is a mysterious thing full of ups and downs. Just when you think life really sucks you turn the corner and there's something beautiful waiting for you, and just when you think you're on easy street and you turn the corner and there's something devastating waiting for you. I feel like we're just getting started."

ANTHONY FACTS!

- Born November 1, 1962 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Anthony's parents John (aka Blackie Dammett) and Margaret (aka Peggy) divorced in 1968. Anthony lived with his mother in Michigan until he was 11, then in California with his father.
- Anthony has two sisters – Julie and Jen – and a brother James.
- Supermodel Heidi Klum, actress Ione Skye and former Spice Girl Mel C are among the famous women that Kiedis has dated. "I've slept with a couple of girls who have slept with Ione Skye," Kiedis revealed last year. "I've been in bed with a girl and she'll be like, 'You know, that last person I had sex with was your ex-girlfriend'. I'm like, 'Well, you don't say!'"
- In 1989, a court in Virginia convicted Kiedis of indecent exposure and sexual battery, after a college student made a complaint.
- Anthony was encouraged to write poetry and stories by Fairfax High English teacher Mrs Vernon.
- He made his movie debut at 16, playing Sylvester Stallone's son in the movie "F.I.S.T.". On the credits he was listed as Cole Dammett – as in "Less Than Zero". Later movie credits include "Tough Guys," "Point Break" and "The Chase."
- At 16, Anthony broke his back after he misjudged a leap from a rooftop into a swimming pool.
- Kiedis crashed his Harley in 1997, breaking 11 bones in his wrist.
- Anthony supports the LA Lakers basketball team. His all-time favourite player is Magic Johnson.
- A keen boxer, Kiedis once fought an exhibition bout with former WBC welterweight champion Oscar de la Hoya.
- Anthony shares his home with a Rhodesian Ridgeback called Buster. He considers Rhodesian Ridgebacks "soufflé" dogs.
- Kiedis collects art and has originals by Salvador Dali, Andy Warhol and Robert Williams, whose work is featured on the cover of Guns N'Roses' "Appetite For Destruction" album.
- Kiedis cites David Bowie, the Dalai Lama, Iggy Pop and his father as his heroes.
- Kiedis has an unusual affection for natural disasters – earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, etc. "Not to be light-hearted about it," he once said, "but it's very amusing to watch the world crumble."
- Kiedis finally kicked heroin with the help of Venice Beach drug counsellor Gloria Scott. When Scott was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Kiedis rented an apartment for her overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Her memory is celebrated on "Venice Queen".
- Anthony doesn't actually like hot chilli peppers. He considers the fruit "too acidic".



Groovy pucker: at a celebrity ice hockey event, LA, January 1995



[THE PICTURES]

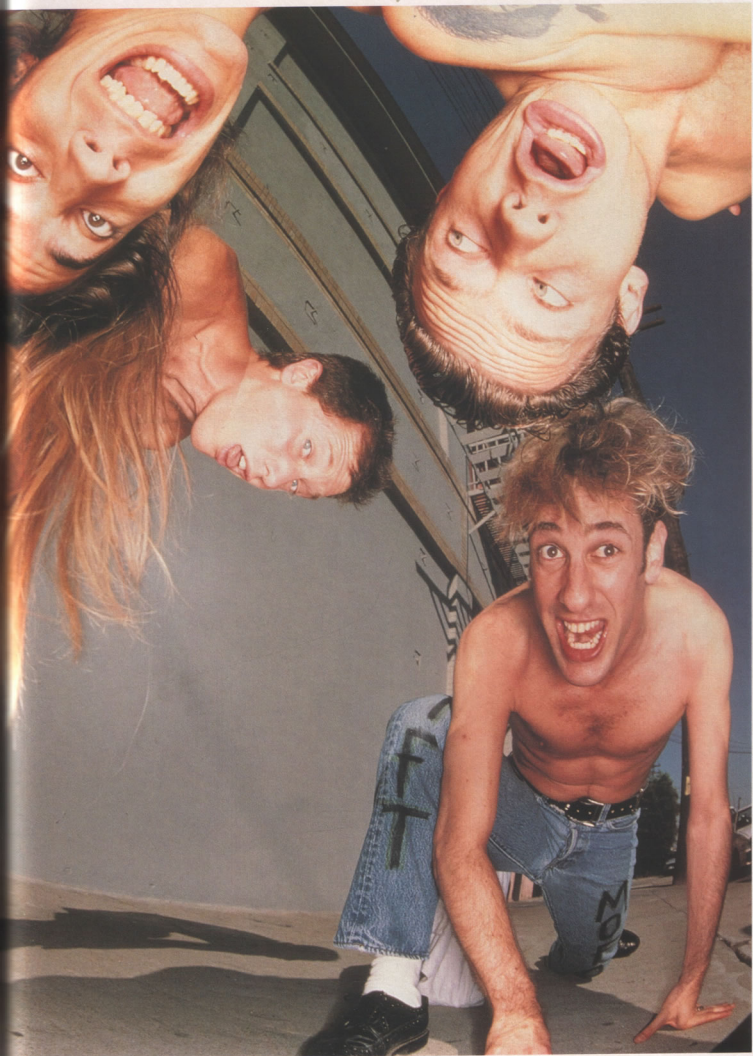
GOOD TIME BOYS [1984- 1990]

Young? Sure. Sweet and innocent? Forget it.
Up for almost anything to get noticed? Totally.

▼ IRONS, SLOVAK, KIEDIS
AND FLEA
Hollywood,
1987

► KIEDIS, IRONS, FLEA
AND SLOVAK
Hollywood,
1987





[THE PICTURES]

▼ SLOVAK, IRONS, FLEA AND KIEDIS
By Chris Clann
New Orleans, December 1987



▼ **KIEDIS, FRUSCIANTE, SMITH
AND FLEA**
By Paul Natkin
Hollywood c.1988

▼ **FLEA, KIEDIS AND FRUSCIANTE**
By Ben DeSoto
Dressing room
1984 *slapik*

► **KIEDIS AND IONE SKYE**
By Dewey Nicks
c.1988



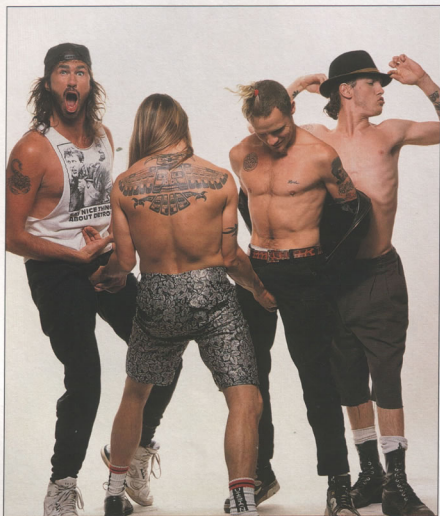
[THE PICTURES]

▼ ANTHONY KIEDIS
By Dave Willis
Brixton Academy,
June 1990

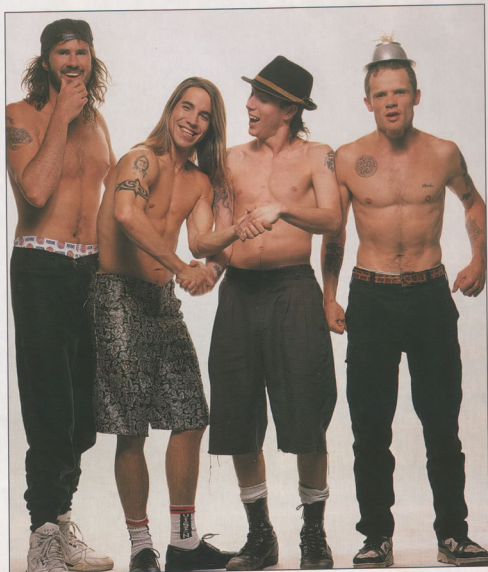
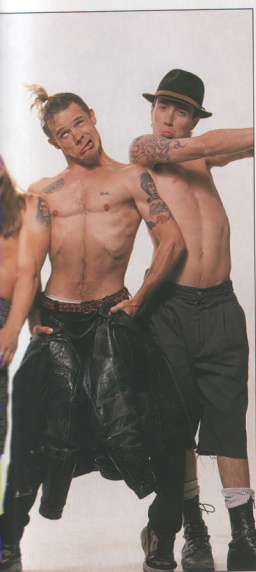
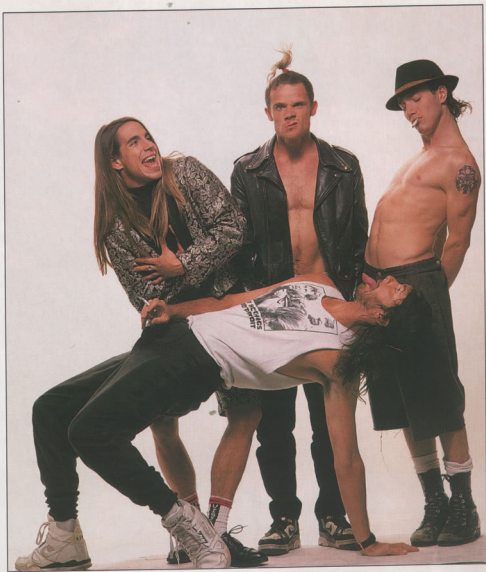
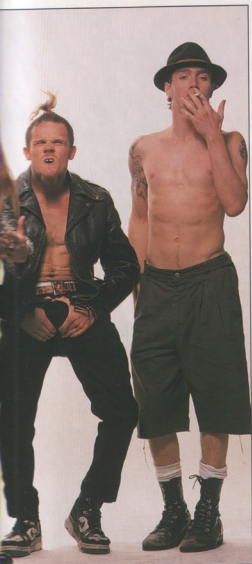


FLEA AND
DAUGHTER CLARA
By William Hames
1990





► SMITH, KIEDIS, FLEA
AND FRUSCIANTE
By Ross Haffin
Los Angeles, 1989





“I can’t think of anything more important than making sounds with my three best friends.”

Anthony Kiedis

[STARTING AGAIN]

H A N G I N G T O U G H

Undeterred by the death of one, and the loss of another band member, the Chili Peppers called for reinforcements and returned to the studio. Thanks to Stevie Wonder and a song about scoring heroin, their whole world was about to be turned upside down...

IT TOOK the Red Hot Chili Peppers a long time to get it right. Of the band's first three albums only 1987's 'Uplift Mofo Party Plan' had made any commercial impression. Even then, it reached only 148 in America's Billboard chart. Today such underachievement would not go unpunished and the Red Hot Chili Peppers would be dropped like a useless, funk-obsessed stone. But back then they weren't and so went on to prove that some things are worth the wait.

The passing of Hillel Slovak forced a group who were cavalier in their attitude toward hard drugs to finally see themselves in sharp focus. It was all fun and games until it became horrifyingly apparent that this stuff could kill you. Anthony Kiedis, who would later describe himself as being "a hardcore junkie", took stock and at least attempted to clean up. The band found a new guitarist, John Frusciante, formerly of the Los Angeles punk-funk crew Thelouious Monster. Just 19 years old when he joined, Frusciante had been a massive fan of the band for four years. He survived a nervous audition and fit the bill perfectly.

"If someone has a set of rules about rock'n'roll, if they play in a clichéd way or dress in a clichéd way then they're probably not going to be right for the Red Hot Chili Peppers," explained Flea of the relevant criteria. "But if they have no rules, no limits to what they do, and they have a love for music, especially funk music, that they're able to express through their playing then they'll probably fit right in with the Red Hot Chili Peppers."

GOING ON previous form, expectations for the new album were modest at best. Even with the new additions of Frusciante and Chad Smith on drums – replacing Jack Irons, grieving to the point of hospitalised clinical depression – the band's label could foresee little more than the usual grinding cocktail of knockabout party funk and some knuckle-headed sexploitation. All good-natured, niche market stuff, but certainly nothing that would ever do significant business outside of the band's core fanbase. What the label got instead was one of the surprise hits of the year.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers bounced back with musical muscle to match their sculpted physiques. Their 1989 album, 'Mother's Milk', was the sound of a band finally hitting their stride, fulfilling the potential they'd hinted at since their inception in the Hollywood punk scene of the early '80s. The band were focused, they were together, and their sound – for the first time – boasted the kind of economy that placed an importance on songwriting rather than undue emphasis on musicianship or 'feel'.

For once, the rule that good things will happen to good bands applied, with the Chilis finding themselves selling the quantity of albums their star quality – but until now, rarely their sound – deserved. With the hit single 'Higher Ground' (a Stevie Wonder composition, taken apart and rebuilt with a thrilling thrash ending) 'Mother's Milk' climbed its way up the charts. The Red Hot Chili Peppers were on their way.

'Mother's Milk' was the group's last record for EMI. After the 'Positive Mental Octopus' tour to promote it, their contract expired and the Chilis moved over to Warner Bros. On the band's video ▶

[STARTING AGAIN]



'Funky Monks', documenting this period in their career, an uncredited member of the band's entourage is filmed saying how the Red Hot Chili Peppers, finally, "have the music in place, the fans in place, everything in place. Everything is on the up for this..."

WHATEVER THE weaknesses of the Chili Peppers' early work, at least they had stuck to their guns. For years the band had played music that defied being pigeonholed, often to their detriment. There were elements of rock, jazz, punk, funk, metal and soul. People knew what they were getting with the blow-dried metal oafs of Sunset Strip, but the Red Hot Chili Peppers? What were you supposed to call *that*?

By the time the band were preparing to record what would become 'BloodSugarSexMagik', their fifth album, things had begun to change. The stifling conformity of mainstream rock was being questioned by a set of colourful groups who held no truck with the rules and clichés that had become as corporate at the labels which funded, distributed and profited from it. There was Faith No More from San Francisco, there was Jane's Addiction and, to a lesser degree, Fishbone from Los Angeles. There was even Metallica, who, with venomous opposition to hair metalers, had sold three million copies in the US of 1988's furiously intense '...And Justice For All' album.

As well as benefiting from this sea change, the Red Hot Chili Peppers also, of course, played their part in it. For years Kiedis had trumpeted the "freedom we feel within this band. The freedom we feel not to have a lid on our music, on where it can go and what we can do with it. I can't think of anything more important than making sounds with my three best friends. And whatever sounds we make we place no restrictions on. That's so important to us. It is us. What we do is very natural, very instinctive, and to try and second guess that would be wrong. It would kill what we have."

The Chili Peppers recorded 'BloodSugarSexMagik' during May and June 1991. As befits a band whose idiosyncrasies and sense of occasion stand tall, sometimes taller, than their music, the four eschewed the usual confines of the recording studio ("A hostile environment" according to Flea) and instead, at producer Rick Rubin's invitation, decamped to his Hollywood home just off Mulholland Drive. Since Flea has been known to describe his band as being not Americans, not even Californians but "Hollywoodians" this seemed entirely fitting. That this was the mansion where Jimi

Pipe dreams: Flea and Frusciante complete the switch from funk metal to scrap metal — during the making of 'BloodSugarSexMagik' in 1991

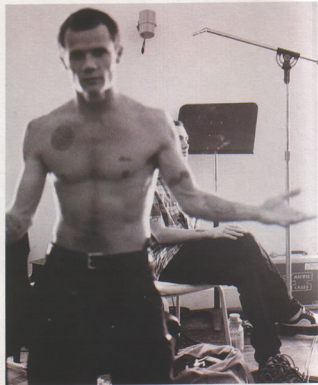
Hendrix once jammed and where The Beatles were alleged to have first dropped acid also greatly appealed to the band. As did the fact that LA Lakers star Earvin 'Magic' Johnson lived just down the street.

Everything seemed to be going well, but there was still the question of whether the Chili Peppers' formidable live sound could be faithfully captured on record. It had got better with each release but it was never really *there*. This was set to change — Rubin was a vibe and noisemaker extraordinaire. He would later achieve critical acclaim for his work with such venerable stars as Johnny Cash and Tom Petty. In 1991, though, he was very much a maverick force and a perfect counterpart for the Chili Peppers. He had produced the Beastie Boys ('Licensed To Ill'), had signed the then-terrifying Public Enemy to his and Russell Simmons' Def Jam label (the pair would split in 1988, with Rubin moving to form Def American) and, most spectacularly of all, had produced the 28 murderous minutes of Slayer's 'Reign In Blood'.

"If Baron von Munchausen had ejaculated the four of us, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, as pieces on a chess board," said Anthony Kiedis at the time, "...Rick Rubin would be the perfect chess player."

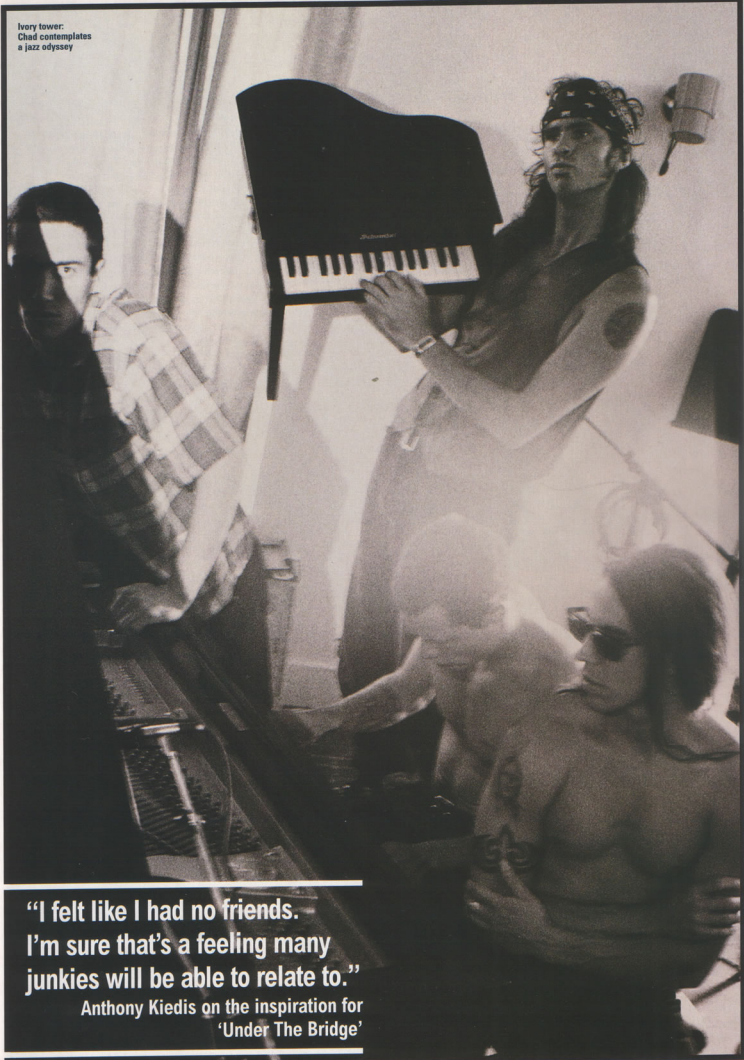
Each member lived in the house, with the exception of drummer Chad Smith ("I only live 20 minutes away. I like to ride in on my bike"), waking at 1pm and starting work an hour later. Except it didn't feel like work, and that was the idea.

Chad Smith and Flea would be there bashing out rhythms on drums and old bit of pipework salvaged from nearby; pausing only when one fell out of time. Then, without exchanging a word or even a look, they'd begin again on the count of four. Anthony Kiedis could be seen from the outside, gliding behind a window, moving with the music as he laid down the vocal track to 'Give It Away'.



Give it away: Flea can offer no more than the shirt off his back

Ivory tower:
Chad contemplates
a jazz odyssey



**"I felt like I had no friends.
I'm sure that's a feeling many
junkies will be able to relate to."**

**Anthony Kiedis on the inspiration for
'Under The Bridge'**

John Frusciante would be on his knees, sliding out riffs with virtuosity and ease, looking up, almost surprised at himself.

"When I write music I get an erection," says Frusciante in 'Funky Monks'. "That's how excited I get. And I'm tempted to masturbate. And sometimes I do, but I try not to ejaculate. I think if I ejaculate it will be to the detriment of the music."

"I think our music exists in the fourth dimension," Flea adds. "I think we exist in the fourth dimension. And that's the place we belong. If I spend too much time thinking about the world, about the cruelties of the world, I would consume so much of my energies that I don't think I'd be able to live, let alone make music."

But live they do – and make music they did – in an environment conducive to both serious recording and just mucking about. Scenes from 'Funky Monks' show the lads giggling with fear and joy as they hang upside down on a climbing frame to have their picture taken, and later laughing like drains as they sing the lyrics to the Thelouious Monster song 'Sammy Hagar Weekend' around the dinner table. Another photo session sees Flea standing over Frusciante in a bathtub, both laughing as it is noted that some stray

Solitary man:
Frusciante in a moment of quiet reflection during the sessions for 'BloodSugarSexMagik'

water makes it look like John's friend has "sprayed a load" over his chest. Elsewhere Flea is shown tenderly bathing his infant daughter Clara as she holds his arm, washing his tattoos. And, somewhat inevitably, we see Chad Smith riding about on his Harley and ogling porn mags.

This was a vintage period for the Red Hot Chili Peppers on every level. The band were unified and often magnificent; the music they were making was sexy in practice as well as principle, really alive for the first time on record. But there was also more than this, a progression that the band themselves would probably be loathe to term 'maturity', but still a progression which smacked of experience and hard lessons learned. Despite the playful mood during the sessions – exemplified by the taut abandon of 'Give It Away' – the defining single release from 'BloodSugarSexMagik' was 'Under The Bridge', an incredibly personal, though rather unpleasant narrative.

The song was a ballad but hardly of a conventional stamp, in its recounting of Kiedis' time as a heroin addict, the hours he wasted trying to score on the darker corners of the world's entertainment capital. The bridge referred to in the song is a real structure located in downtown LA. This part of the city is hidden, like a family secret, behind the chrome and glass skyscrapers of LA's financial district. It is a fifth-floor place where Kiedis used to roam with his friend Mario, a Mexican gangster, searching for a fix of heroin. There was a bridge beneath which anyone who wasn't a member of a certain Mexican gang was not permitted to pass. Kiedis was allowed passage only after Mario lied to his fellow gang members, telling them that the singer was dating his sister.

The melody was written while Kiedis, under the influence once again, drove home from band practice over the Hollywood Freeway, consumed by a feeling of emptiness and despair. "I felt like I had no one," he said. "I felt like I had no friends. I'm sure that's a feeling many junkies will be able to relate to."

The beauty of 'Under The Bridge', despite its subject matter, lent 'BloodSugarSexMagik' such authority that the band found themselves propelled into rock's superleague with the release of the album. In terms of numbers, of dollars and cents, the Red Hot Chili Peppers were almost untouchable.

'BLOODSUGARSEXMAGIK' was released on September 24, 1991, the same day as Nirvana's 'Nevermind'. And while Kurt and co, fuelled by 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', may have headed the rock revolution – the Red Hot Chili Peppers were doing far more than riding on their coat-tails. 'BloodSugarSexMagik' stayed on the Billboard chart for a full year, with only 'Nevermind', Metallica's 'black album' and Pearl Jam's 'Ten' selling comparable numbers in that time. The band were famous, they were stars – proper, gilded stars. The festivals, the stadiums, the TV shows, the celebrity bashes, the money, girls and more illicit pleasures were all there for the taking. But, as it would soon transpire, all of it came with a price.

Watching the Red Hot Chili Peppers as they clown around and work in 'Funky Monks' is a strange experience, because we now know what trouble lay just around the corner. By any normal standards, the death of a founding member after four albums toiling away in semi-obscure before finally making it, would have provided sufficient grounding. Not for the Chili Peppers.

Ultimately, though, it's watching John Frusciante's enthusiasm and sheer excitement at being in his favourite band that is rather heart-breaking, given the appalling depths to which he would descend following – and largely caused by – the success of the album he was making... 'BloodSugarSexMagik'. ●

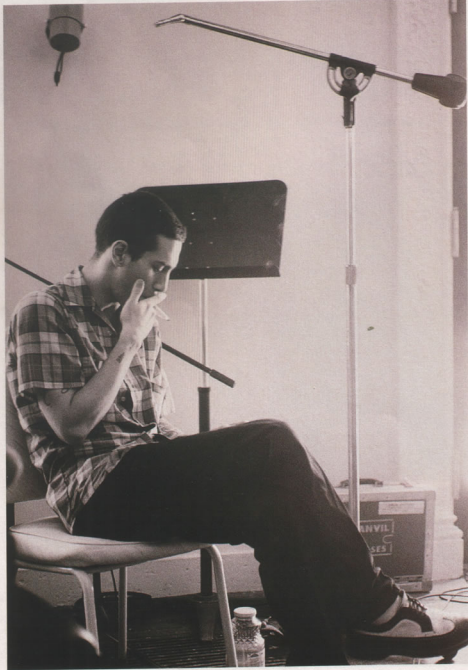
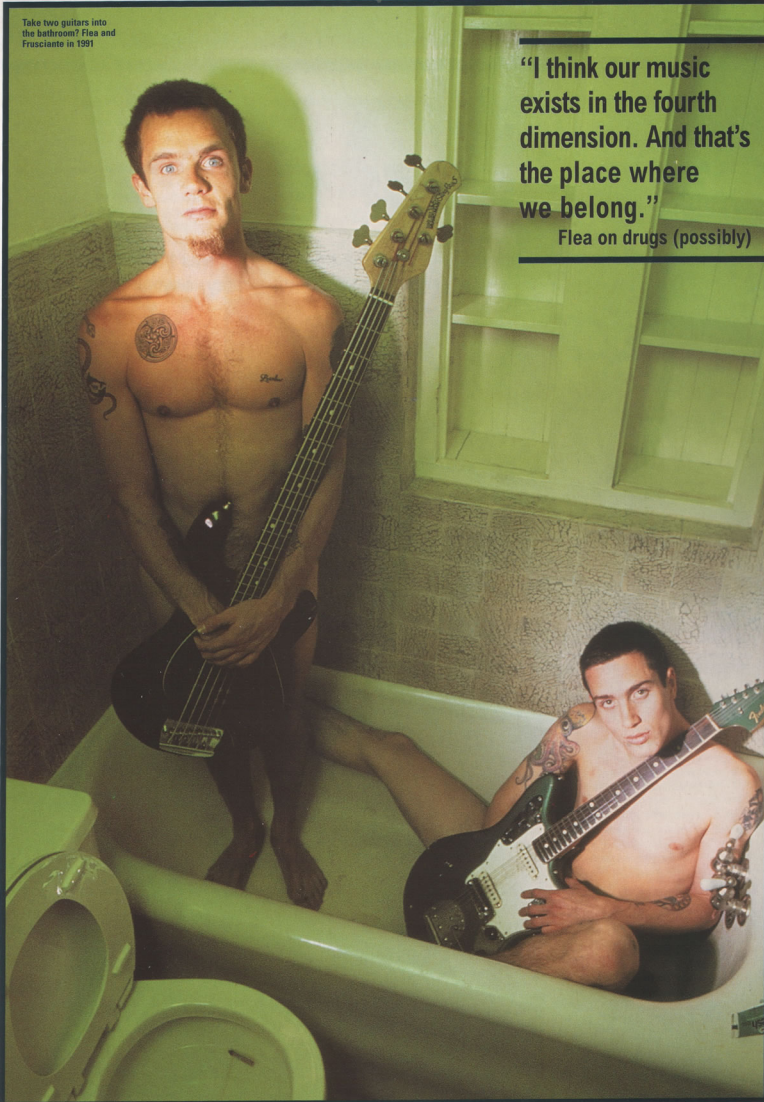


Photo: Michael Tighe

Take two guitars into
the bathroom? Flea and
Frusciante in 1991

**"I think our music
exists in the fourth
dimension. And that's
the place where
we belong."**

Flea on drugs (possibly)



HIGH TIMES

Me? Anthony Kiedis? With some heroin? Under a bridge? What was I thinking? Whatever the answer, it worked. Big time. Constant radio airplay, anyone?

BLOODSUGARSEXMAGIK
1991, Warner Bros



ROCK HISTORIANS will – thanks to the title of the documentary that went on the road with Sonic Youth and their support band Nirvana – remember 1991 as ‘The Year That Punk Broke’, a time when grunge was transformed from a regional spark to a global conflagration. But the mind can play tricks. As the year ended, Nirvana and Pearl Jam were indeed wowing arena crowds in the US, but they were doing so in support to the Red Hot Chili Peppers – in truth, then looking like the *only* band capable of challenging Guns N’ Roses and Metallica’s hegemony even before a misty-eyed ballad about heroin addiction took a stranglehold on US radio. Seattle bands happily accepted the plaudits for drowning out hair metal’s vacuous roar, but look beyond such myth-making and it’s easy to see the release of ‘BloodSugarSexMagik’, with its carefully measured mix of tender, soulful melody and taut, muscular funk, as the *real* beginning of the end for West Hollywood’s cock rockers.

There was a certain irony to this. For much of their early careers, the band gave every impression of being the very definition of Californian masculinity: loud, brash alpha males more concerned about what lay between their legs than between their ears. Up until 1991, the Peppers didn’t do emotional: buffed boys simply didn’t cry. By 1991, however, Anthony Kiedis, John Frusciante, Flea and Chad Smith were all fast approaching 30, boys no longer. That it took Rick Rubin, a man who had made his name master-minding the career of the wifely juvenile Beastie Boys, to coax the quartet into adulthood was a surprise. That they pulled off this transformation so effortlessly was remarkable.

The Chili Peppers were in a good place mentally when they convened to record their fifth album. They’d spent two years touring ‘Mother’s Milk’, two years bonding as a genuine unit. Rubin, who’d first met the band in 1987 prior to the recording of ‘The Uplift Mofa Party Plan’ – a time, according to Flea, when the band had ‘a

dark drug cloud’ over them – caught the very final date of the ‘Mother’s Milk’ tour and pronounced their performance ‘phenomenal’. His challenge then was to draw out this kind of performance day after day in the studio. Rubin instinctively understood that at this period in their career the Peppers wouldn’t have been comfortable in a sterile, high-tech, recording environment so he extended an invitation to the band to live with him in his Laurel Canyon home to work on the album.

Rubin’s home was steeped in Hollywood mythology – it was built on the site of Harry Houdini’s former mansion and was allegedly the setting for The Beatles’ first LSD trip. It was also, legend had it, haunted. The four musicians detected the

presence of spirits from the start, but they weren’t concerned; they had their own ghosts to lay to rest.

EVEN THOUGH he’d tragically died prior to its recording, guitarist Hillel Slovak’s finger-prints were all over ‘Mother’s Milk’, and not simply on tracks such as ‘Knock Me Down’ which explicitly dealt with his death. Frusciante, just 18 when he joined the band and Slovak’s biggest fan, was keen to pay his respects to his predecessor, and his guitar playing throughout the album adhered closely to Slovak’s own sonic blueprints.

Anthony Kiedis was attempting to move on in his life, both creatively and personally. He’d kicked a heroin habit, and in doing so had connected with his own fears and

Face the pain: the Chiliis learn to grin and bear it, all the way to the charts



insecurities as never before. The trademark braggadocio remained in place (Kiedis comes across as a walking erection on the libidinous grooves of 'Suck My Kiss' and 'Sir Psycho Sexy'), but this time around, encouraged by Rubín, he was also intent upon proving there was a heart behind those polished pecs.

Rubín's primary achievement, then, was to convince the Chili Peppers to chill the f**k out and to tap into the relaxed

Rubín's primary achievement was to get them to chill the fk out ...and have fun.**

bonhomie that had developed on the road. That achieved, he could get them to open up to one another and the tape, to strip all the instrumental showboating and to get to the core of their songs. By falling into line, the band discovered that they could actually have fun making an album.

They recorded their cover of Robert Johnson's 'They're Red Hot' outside in the Californian summer air, Chad Smith playing with his hands as the others strummed acoustic guitars. They raided a nearby junkyard to acquire pieces of metal on which to thump out the percussive mid-section of 'Breaking The Girl'. They invited John Frusciante's mum and her friends from the church choir to sing backing vocals on 'Under The Bridge', adding a jubilant, heavenly coda to Kiedis' touching open letter to his adopted hometown of LA.

It was the latter song which truly signposted their future. A lesson in 'less is more' songwriting, free from the tricky instrumental interplay and lyrical riddling which weighed down much of the band's early material, it transcended its original subject matter – essentially, 'recovering heroin addict finds solace and succour in a city not renowned for its humanity' – to communicate on the most basic level, touching a nerve with anyone who held some place or someone special.

America – and American FM radio – has always been a sucker for a good power ballad, and from the moment the song peaked at Number 2 on the 'Billboard' chart, the Chili Peppers' fate was sealed. Granted, you'd have got long odds on the quartet even being around 10 years later, much less thriving as the biggest rock band in the world, but here, at last, was incontestable proof that California's finest were ready to become a global concern.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'The Power Of Equality'

A bubbling bass riff, jangling Hendrix funk chords, spartan beats and staccato rapping.

2 'If You Have To Ask'

Themed around the band's new sense of identity, with the first of several astonishing guitar solos.

3 'Breaking The Girl'

The first real surprise as ringing acoustic chords introduce Kiedis' moving tribute to his mother Peggy.

4 'Funky Monks'

'There are no monks in this band,' wails Anthony Kiedis on this lolling mid-paced funk work-out.

5 'Suck My Kiss'

The Chills at their leanest and most muscular. The guitars sucked rock fans onto dance floors, the chorus destroyed daytime radio. Monster!

6 'I Could Have Lied'

Frusciante on acoustic as Kiedis reflects on lost love.

7 'Mellowship Slinky In B Major'

Funk riffs slip and slide as Kiedis namechecks LA liquor laureate Charles Bukowski.

8 'The Righteous And The Wicked'

Ace guitar from Frusciante but one of the album's weaker 'joints'.

9 'Give It Away'

Born out of a studio jam, this was (im)pure throbbing sex music.

10 'BloodSugarSexMagik'

Trademark heavy funk with a warm '70s ambience. A worthy title-track.

11 'Under The Bridge'

The one that made them superstars.

12 'Naked In The Rain'

Kiedis implores one Dr Doolittle for tips on how to communicate with the animal kingdom.

13 'Apache Rose Peacock'

More nonsensical babbling. Forgettable tribute to New Orleans.

14 'The Greeting Song'

More of a bass masterclass than a song *per se*.

15 'My Lovely Man'

A tender and affecting remembrance song for Hillel Slovak.

16 'Sir Psycho Sexy'

Overlong 'comical' sex fantasy as the titular hero gets hot and bothered with a lady cop. *Sure* he does.

17 'They're Red Hot'

A frantic skiffle-style cover of a Robert Johnson blues tune.

Physical

graffiti

In their perpetual state of semi-nakedness, RHCP have had ample opportunity to show off their body art. But what does it all mean?

SPENDING TIME in a tattooist's chair is a rite of passage for a Red Hot Chili Pepper. The one piece that is most identifiable as a Chili tattoo is Anthony Kiedis' terrifically detailed tribal eagle which spreads across his back. The inspiration and meaning behind the tattoo comes from the singer's fascination with Native American culture and the artist who created it was Dutch tattooist Henk Schiffmacher.

Kiedis first visited him during a trip to Amsterdam in 1985 – on a short promotional tour of Europe in support of 'Freaky Styley'. Then, Kiedis opted for the portrait of a Native American on his right arm.

If you drift along upon the sweet aroma of Amsterdam's myriad coffee shops, brothels and sex shops there is a museum housing artefacts spanning the history of the once primitive artform. The building – located at Oudezijds Achterburgwal 130 – also doubles as a studio for Schiffmacher and a spiritual second home for the band.

Schiffmacher was born March 22, 1952 the son of a butcher. He was, worryingly, dismissed from the army on the grounds of mental instability but made a connection with the band who entrusted him to render beautiful, indelible works of art into their arms, legs and backs. Schiffmacher – more commonly known as Henky Penky – has also tattooed members of Pearl Jam, Van Halen, the Ramones, the Foo Fighters and many more.

A couple of years after his first visit to Schiffmacher's studio, Kiedis chose a design that would cover his entire upper back. The tattooist warned Kiedis that his tribal design would take many six-hour sessions. The singer jokingly remarked that, given his own schedule, it would also take several years to complete.

During the preparation for the recording of 1989's 'Mother's Milk', the band made Schiffmacher's studio their unofficial base. The artist concentrated on Kiedis' extravagant design but while the singer took time to recover from the shock his body went into after hours of continual tattooing, Schiffmacher took time out to drill, among other pieces, a languid, pink octopus onto guitarist Frusciante's right arm.

Schiffmacher, also a gifted graphic artist, designed the tribal tongue illustration that is central to the Chili Peppers' breakthrough album 'BloodSugarSexMagik', with the inside of Kiedis' right wrist forming the image for the back. Upon it is the asterisk which is part of the band's logo and symbolises chaos – an apt choice for a band whose personal lives have been anything but peaceful.

"I've never regretted any of my tattoos, and I still want more," Kiedis says today. "It's beautiful to watch them grow old and fade and become like worn-in jeans. They're all representative of times in my life, so I can't imagine ever wanting to erase any time in my life."



[TATTOOS]

Anthony Kiedis

UPPER ARMS
Two portraits of Native American chiefs underlining Kiedis' interest in Native American culture.

UPPER RIGHT ARM
A Fleur de Lys armband, essentially a stylised flower, but long associated with royalty.

UPPER LEFT ARM
Heart design armband that echoes the Fleur de Lys pattern on Kiedis' other arm, but on the inside there is a broken heart motif.

RIGHT INNER ARM
Tiger. Says Anthony: "I'm the year of the tiger in the Chinese calendar too, and my name is Tony..."

LOWER ARMS
Pair of Maori designs symbolising love.

RIGHT INNER WRIST
The Red Hot Chili Peppers logo – circular to symbolise infinity, an asterisk to symbolise chaos.

BACK
Eagle. In a Native American tribal style that was designed and tattooed by Henky Penky and took over 18 months to complete.



Chad Smith

UPPER RIGHT ARM
Scorpion. No, not a homage to the German rockers. Just a tough arachnid.

UPPER LEFT ARM
Tribal badge. A totem-style eagle in red and black.

UPPER INNER ARMS
Chinese symbols representing the names of his children.

RIGHT THIGH
Octopus, more stylised than Frusciante's.





UPPER LEFT ARM

Jimi Hendrix portrait. One of Flea's many musical heroes. The band have covered 'Fire', 'Crosstown Traffic' and 'Castles Made Of Sand' in their 20-year career.

LEFT ARM

'Clara'. The name of Flea's daughter.

LEFT ARM

Elephant armband. A playful, colourful confirmation of the bassist's love of animals.

LEFT INNER ARM

Abstract pattern. This splurge of lines has an X in the middle, possibly signifying Flea's love of the Los Angeles punks, X.

LEFT AND RIGHT KNUCKLES

'Love/Love'. More friendly than the thuggish 'Love/Hate' motif used by hardened manual labourers and inmates.

RIGHT INSIDE ARM

Tribal bird. Another Henky Penky totem design.

RIGHT SIDE OF CHEST

Celtic badge. It is thought to be the oldest Celtic symbol and is supposed to represent the three stages of man: birth, death, eternity.

LEFT SIDE OF CHEST

'Loesha'. The name of his ex-wife and the mother of his daughter Clara.

RIGHT ARM

Snake. Weaves around an older pair of dolphins and an S-shaped celtic dragon, the latter possibly a tribute to Hillel Slovak.

BACK

Tribal piece. This design features a cheeky reference to Flea's gap-toothed grin.



John Fusciante

RIGHT UPPER ARM

Octopus designed by Henky Penky. A colourful reminder of the 'Positive Mental Octopus Tour' in support of 'Mother's Milk'.

RIGHT WRIST

The Chili Peppers asterisk - like Kiedis'.

LEFT UPPER ARM

A Native American flash, designed by Henky Penky.

LEFT LOWER ARM

Face mixing good and evil. Inspired by jazz musician Ornette Coleman's 'Dancing In Your Head' album cover.

LEFT INNER WRIST

Tribal pattern in black. Similar style to the design on his left upper arm.

RIGHT WRIST

Red and blue design. Tilt your head to see a symbolic design of a man and woman 'getting down'.



JOHN FRUSCIANTE

GUITARIST 1988-1992 AND 1998-PRESENT

THE CHILI Peppers' own prodigal son, John Frusciante has lived more than most. Joining his favourite band as a teenager, leaving five years later as a basketcase, and falling into crippling heroin addiction, you'd have got short odds on the guitarist surviving the 1990s, much less making a Lazarus-style recovery and transforming

shorter and a chorus bigger. I know what that's all about, and I'm not in any kind of fight with that. I see that the purpose is to make a pop record."

FAME "I was very confused when I quit the band. I got into my head that stardom was something evil. If you were a

GROWING UP "At 19, I might have looked like a stud, but I was a weakling inside. I wasn't proud of who I was then. And now I'm proud of who I am."

THE FUTURE "I've lived in other dimensions. This life is hardly important to me. It's very small compared to the importance that I think the fourth and fifth

"I was very confused when I quit the band. I thought that stardom was something evil. I don't see it that way any more."

the Chilis into the world's biggest band. That mouth of gleaming artificial teeth (set into bone transplanted from his hip) may have cost his bandmates \$70,000, but his value to the band is immeasurable.

TEENAGE KICKS "When I was younger, I didn't have any money, but I used to spend whatever I did have on tickets to Chili Peppers shows, for myself and whatever friends didn't have any money. Sometimes I spent as much as a hundred bucks on tickets. Even then I thought they were the greatest band in the world and that they could add beauty to anyone's life."

SONGWRITING "When I'm writing music I feel like I'm doing the same thing as the Ramones or the New York Dolls or what any of these people were doing, just writing music because you're excited. But I understand the level of success of the band that I'm in, and I'm not going to try to pretend that what I really want is to be smaller. I know what we're doing when we're going in there and putting the vocals under a microscope and making a verse

rock star, you were trying to put people on. I don't see it that way any more."

DRUGS "Heroin and coke made me feel better. It made the pain go away. But I definitely don't recommend drug use or being a drug addict to someone who is in pain. But if you are truly in as much pain as I was then you have no choice but to be a drug addict."

SEX "I'll get an erection while I'm playing guitar and I'll masturbate or I'll hold back if the orgasm is something that would be detrimental to my strength and creativity. Sometimes I'll see that erection as being my enemy."

SUCCESS "I don't give a f**k about being successful. I don't depend on that that for my happiness. I can be happy whether I'm a loser or a winner. I still love myself either way."

LOS ANGELES "When my mom asked if I wanted to move to L.A, I said, 'Yeah!' because I knew that was where the rock stars were. I was seven."

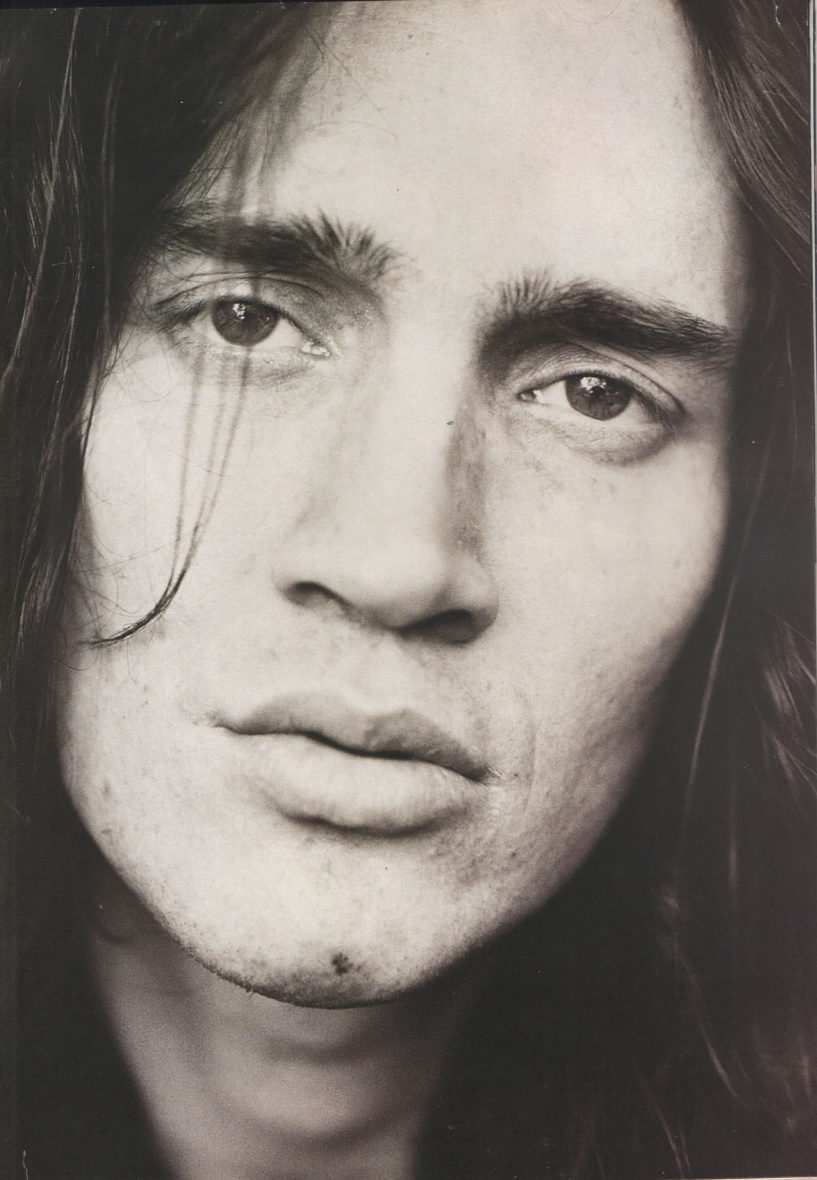
dimension have. Those places are much more real to me, like when you have a dream and it's more real to you than real life. Compared to where I'll be going, this seems like a dream. My whole life now just feels like a dream."

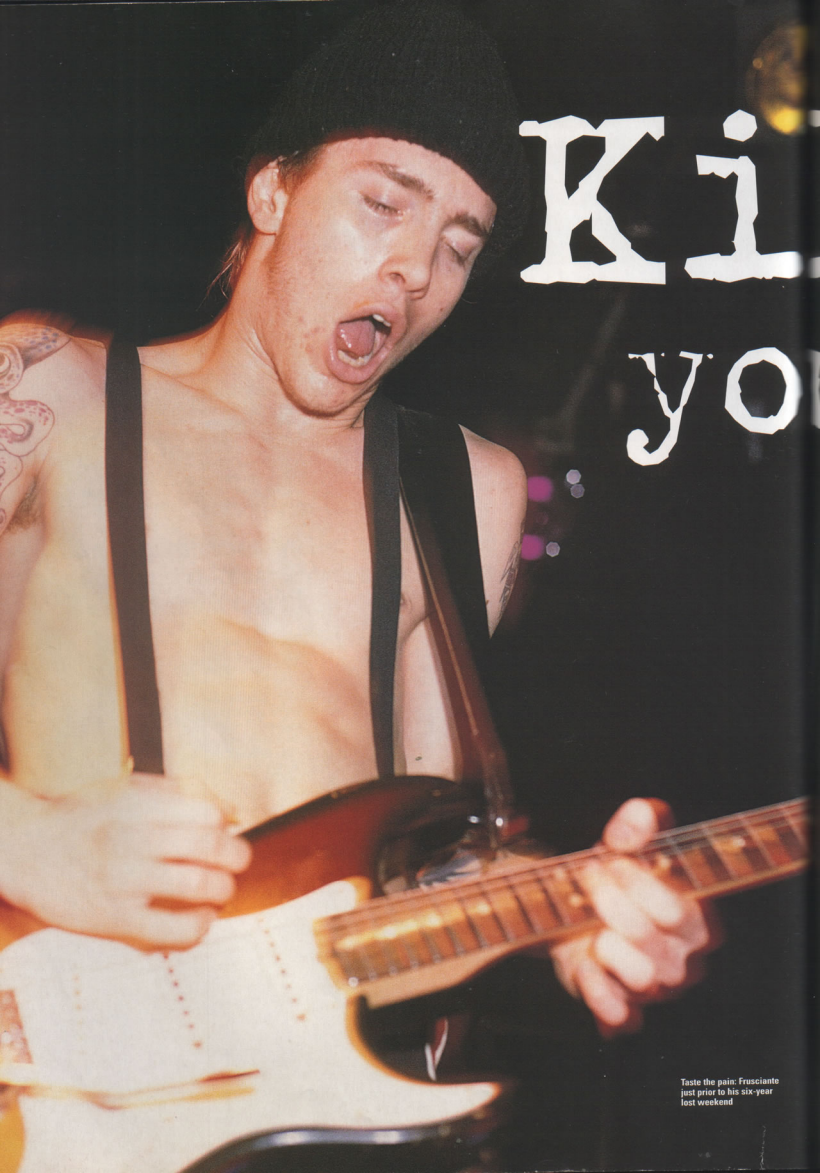


Frusciante: no more Mr Vice Guy

JOHN FACTS!

- Born March 5, 1970 in New York.
- John's father, also called John, was a classically trained pianist before he became a lawyer. His mother Gail sings harmony vocals on 'Under The Bridge'.
- Frusciante started guitar at the age of seven, but gave up because he couldn't play like Eddie Van Halen or Jimmy Page. He resumed two years later after discovering punk rock. When he was 10 he could play the whole of the Sex Pistols' 'Never Mind The Bollocks'.
- Frusciante first saw the Red Hot Chili Peppers in concert in 1985, when the band played the Variety Arts Center in LA. They instantly became his favourite band.
- At 17, Frusciante attended an audition for Frank Zappa's band, but left without trying out for the position. "I realised that I wanted to be a rock star, do drugs and get girls," he said, "and that I wouldn't be able to do that if I was in Zappa's band."
- According to legend, by way of initiation into the Chilis, Frusciante had to show his bandmates his erect penis. We can only assume that he measured up.
- John's favourite guitar player is New Order frontman Bernard Sumner, formerly guitarist with Joy Division.
- John has released three solo albums – 'Niandra LaDes And Usually Just A T-Shirt', 'Smile From The Streets You Hold' and 'To Record Only Water For Ten Days'.
- Maverick Hollywood director Vincent Gallo directed a video for 'Going Inside', the first single from 'To Record Only Water For Ten Days'. Frusciante returned the favour to his friend by contributing several songs to the soundtrack of Gallo's new movie 'Brown Bunny'.
- Frusciante is currently dating Stella Schnabel, the daughter of acclaimed artist/film-maker Julian Schnabel, who created all the artwork for 'By The Way'.
- Frusciante once gave an LA taxi driver a \$2,000 tip by mistake.





Ki
yo

Taste the pain: Frusciante just prior to his six-year
lost weekend

falling yourself to live

What do you do when you're the guitarist in a global funk phenomenon? Listen to the 400 ghosts in your head, leave the band and spend six years doing so much coke and heroin that all your teeth fall out, of course...

THE VOICES in John Frusciante's head were getting harder and harder to ignore. They had been speaking to him for as long as Frusciante could remember — it was largely because of them that he first picked up the guitar at the age of seven. But for months now, they were predicting disaster, telling him he had to move on, urging him to abandon the life he had carved out for himself over the past four years. And deep down the 22-year-old guitarist knew they were right.

In the quiet of a Tokyo hotel room Frusciante had time to reflect upon where it had all gone wrong. When he'd been asked to join the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 1988, it was a dream come true. The Peppers were his favourite band: Anthony Kiedis and Flea his personal heroes. For the first couple of years, Frusciante threw himself headlong into the rock'n'roll whirl, taking full advantage of all the temptations laid before him. But it didn't take long for the dream to turn sour. The sex became routine, the drinking and drug-taking monotonous, the fame and adulation embarrassing.

Frusciante had always wanted to be a musician, but music now played such a tiny role in the circus that was his day-to-day life. Being a rock star, he realised, wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

The voices in his head told him to quit when he'd finished laying down his guitar parts for "BloodSugarSexMagik". But the band were getting on better than ever, and hitting new creative heights, so he chose to ignore them. On the road, however, it all

started going horribly wrong. The record company wanted more photo sessions and more interviews. The fans wanted nudity and the hit singles played live *exactly* as they been played in Rick Rubin's Hollywood home in the spring of 1991. The guitarist hated the showbiz rut he felt the band were falling into and hated being treated as a performing monkey. But nobody cared very much for what John Frusciante wanted at all.

And so on May 7, 1992 Frusciante announced his intention to leave the Chili Peppers, one day into the band's Japanese tour. Though he'd been difficult to work with during their earlier European trek ("I did want to kick his little f**king ass sometimes," Chad Smith would later confess) his bandmates pleaded with him to change his mind. Reluctantly, he agreed to play one more show. When the quartet took to the stage of the Orniya Sonic City Hall in Saitama that night, Anthony Kiedis took the guitarist aside and gestured to the 2,500 rapt faces staring up at them as if to say, "Look at this, look at what we've achieved, look what you'd be leaving behind." Frusciante wasn't swayed. The following morning he flew back to Los Angeles. And, for a little while, the voices in his head weren't quite so shrill any more.

TO GET an idea of John Frusciante's mindset in his final years in the Red Hot Chili Peppers, you need only listen to the music on his first solo album, 1994's "Niandra LaDes And Usually Just A



Going bust: an early
Chilis promo shot with
Frusciante (centre)



Lean times:
Frusciante sleeps
it off with Flea

T-Shirt'. Recorded on a four-track tape recorder and heavily influenced by sonic eccentrics Syd Barrett and Captain Beefheart, the bizarrely-titled 'songs' ('Your Pussy's Glued To A Building On Fire', 'Blood On My Neck From Success'), with their scratchy acoustic guitar and surrealist/nonsensical stream-of-consciousness lyrics, are the sound of overloaded mental circuitry melting down. The recordings spanned a time period between the 'BloodSugarSexMagik' sessions and the months immediately prior to his departure from the band, and as the album unfolds, the decline in his mental state is all too obvious. As he told a US magazine at the time: "My recordings had gone from these happy, optimistic things, to celebrations of the surreal, to really scattered, demonic-sounding things like the sound of someone whose mind was about to explode."

Frusciante wasn't using this kind of language solely for effect. At the time he claimed to have "400 ghosts" in his mind telling him what to do.

"I wasn't spiritually protected against the spirits that meant me no good," he related. "Ghosts that are just there to f**k with me and drive me crazy. I couldn't discern between them and the ones that were helping me and I was so confused. Everything that I was learning seemed to be pulling me towards death. I saw death in everything around me. And everything that was beautiful represented everything that was sad, lost and gone."

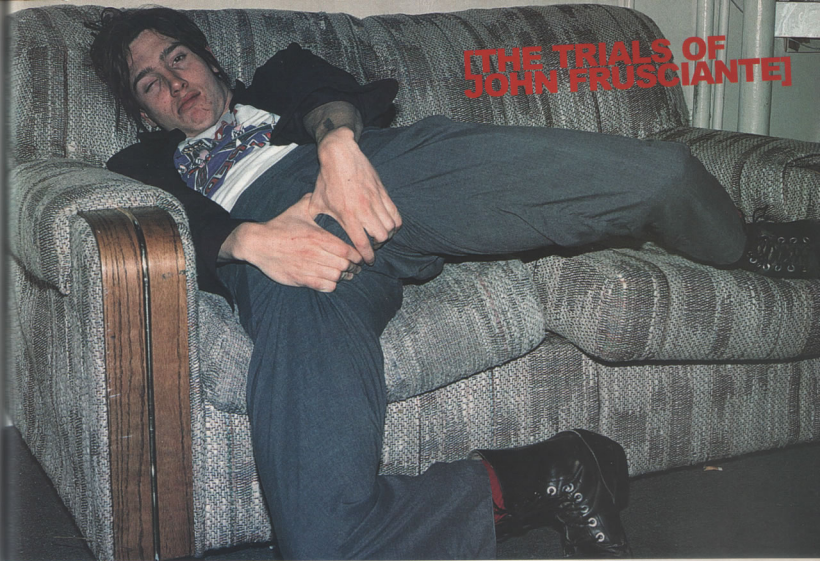
As Frusciante wallowed in depression in the Hollywood Hills in the summer of 1992, his erstwhile bandmates initially hadn't time to offer their sympathy. 'Under The Bridge' was just breaking big on US radio, and the band were very much the new darlings of the all-rock set as they embarked upon that summer's Lollapalooza tour. Anthony Kiedis felt betrayed by the guitarist's exit, and it would be five years before he spoke a single word to Frusciante. Flea, the Chili Pepper closest to the guitarist while he was still a member of the band, was more sympathetic. When the band returned to LA, he would occasionally drop by Frusciante's home to jam with his old friend. More often that not, he would arrive to find Frusciante lying on his couch, wholly uninterested in doing anything.

In a bid to shake off this numbing torpor, the guitarist decided to embark upon a rather radical period of spiritual re-alignment. Step one involved putting his guitar to one side and channelling his artistic energies into his painting instead. Step two, he decided, even more radically, would be to start taking heroin and cocaine *all the time*.

"When I was on them was the only time I was happy," he reasoned. "So I figured there was no disadvantage in it. I felt I was doing something good and healthy for myself and I didn't care if other people said it was unhealthy."

Having been surrounded by junkies for

[THE TRIALS OF JOHN FRUSCIANTE]



much of his adult life, Flea initially stuck by Frusciante and his new lifestyle choice. But as Frusciante's drug use rapidly escalated into staggering abuse, the bassist's visits to his home became more and more infrequent.

"I didn't think his brain and body could stand up to the amount of drugs he was doing," Flea would later confess. Frusciante understood. "Two people can't have any kind of consistent relationship when one of them is a junkie," he explained. "We did drugs together once in a while, but for Flea it was a recreational thing, for me, it was my life." But he was too far down his chosen path to be deflected, even when the

Details of the night remain sketchy, but at some point Phoenix took heroin, and just after 1am, he staggered out of the club and collapsed on the sidewalk, his body racked by violent seizures. By 2am the young actor was dead, as a result of what the LA Coroners' Office would describe as "acute multiple drug intoxication".

The Chili Peppers camp were devastated by their friend's death. Hearing the news in New York on the day before his 31st birthday, Anthony Kiedis claims to have wept for 24 hours. Flea — who would later celebrate his friend's life with the lyrics to "Transcending" ("I called you hippy, you said f**k off") on the Peppers' 1995 album 'One

Goodnight, John Boy: Frusciante starts his long descent, 1990

"What note next, voices?" Cleaned-up, circa 2000

"I felt that heroin and cocaine were good and healthy for me." — JOHN FRUSCIANTE

potential dangers of his addiction were highlighted in the starkest, most tragic way imaginable.

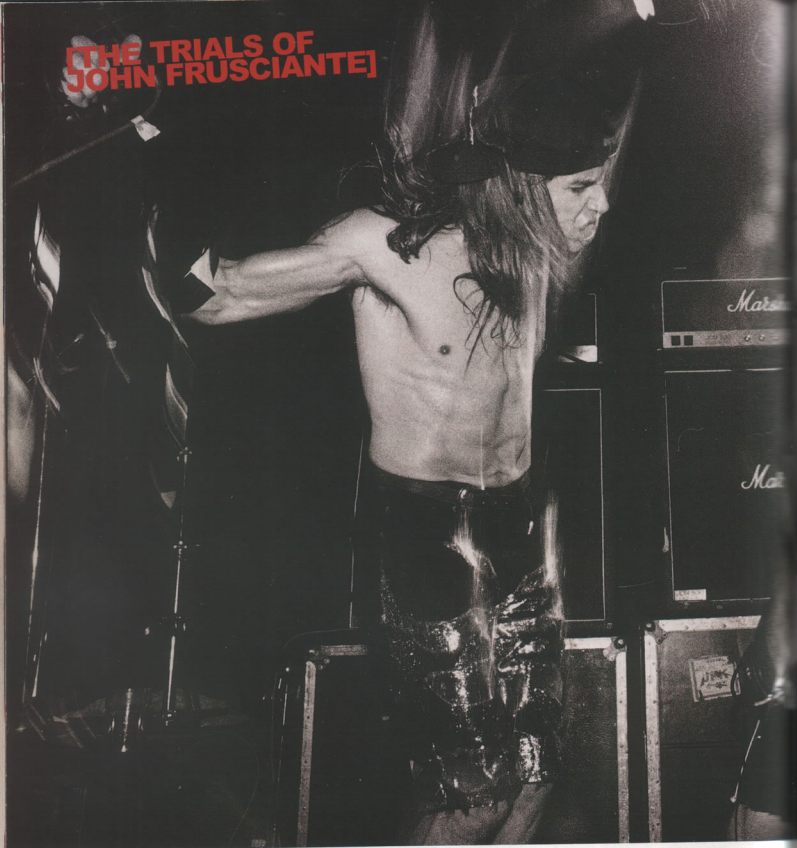
The Chili Peppers had been friends with rising Hollywood star River Phoenix for several years. The actor had worked with Flea on 'My Own Private Idaho' (directed by Gus Van Sant who also directed the Peppers' 'Under The Bridge' promo) and had collaborated with Frusciante on two songs 'Bought Her Soul' and 'Soul Removal'. On the night of October 30, 1993, Phoenix went with his sister Rain and girlfriend Samantha Mathis to Johnny Depp's Viper Room club on LA's Sunset Boulevard.

Hot Minute' — had something of a breakdown. Yet Frusciante, while talking about having lost "a playmate", refused to see Phoenix's death as a wake-up call. The previous year, the voices in his head had told him that he was to take drugs for six years: he still had five to go.

HOLLYWOOD HAS always loved its misfits, and among a certain achingly fashionable clique, John Frusciante's drug-fuelled spiritual quest was considered noble and admirable. Some time in 1994 Johnny Depp and Butthole Surfers frontman Gibby Haynes visited Frusciante's home to



[THE TRIALS OF JOHN FRUSCIANTE]



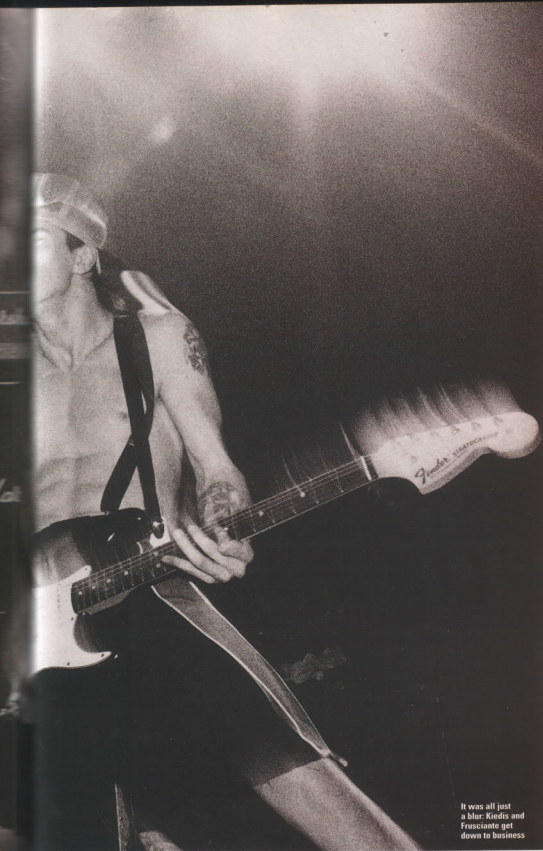
document the guitarist's lifestyle for a short movie (later sent out to journalists to promote the release of 'Niandra LaDes And Usually Just A T-Shirt'). Filmed in black-and-white, the abstract movie featured a cameo from '60s drug guru Timothy Leary, and rambling, mumbled monologues from the man of the house which reflected his chaotic, squalid surroundings. As the camera panned around the house, scrawls of graffiti reading, "My eye hurts" and "Stabbing pain with discipline's knife" flashed into view. This was not the home of a happy man. The art set considered the piece, simply titled "Stuff", haunting and

affecting. Many others who saw it, though, considered it distasteful voyeurism of the worst kind, an unnecessary, cruel vacation into one man's nightmarish existence.

In 1995, more strangers would visit Frusciante's home, as Rick Rubin's American Recordings label gently pushed the guitarist into promotional chores for 'Niandra La Des...'. Frusciante was a genial host to the media folk who dropped in on him, and more lucid and together than the rumours surrounding him may have suggested. He talked of his love of artists Vincent van Gogh and Marcel Duchamp, sang the praises of his girlfriend Toni and

told the world that he was jamming with Flea again, the two old friends having started an instrumental project called The Three Amoebas with former Jane's Addiction/Porno For Pyros drummer Stephen Perkins. He was still given to bizarre pronouncements — one magazine sensitively titled their article on the guitarist 'Space Cadet' — but the general feeling was that John Frusciante was going to be okay.

He OD'd in February 1996 and, clinically died. This was a result of his body containing, he estimated, just one 12th of the blood it was supposed to have. After getting a blood transfusion, though, he immediately



It was all just a blur: Kiedis and Frusciante get down to business

thought, "Great, I'm good to go again. Let me get my hands on some more drugs". From this point, he was spending up to \$500 a day on his habit. With only royalty cheques keeping him afloat, this was always going to lead to problems. At one point, Frusciante owed \$30,000 to his dealer, and had to beg for cash from his friends to avoid taking a bullet in the head. That same year, he was kicked out of his house for not paying his rent. Temporarily housed in the Chateau Marmont hotel – famously, the rock star-friendly hotel in which comedian John Belushi died from a lethal narcotic cocktail – the guitarist was visited by

Robert Wilonsky, a reporter from the Phoenix New Times, who was aghast at the transformation which heroin had wrought in the once cherubic guitarist.

"His upper teeth are nearly gone now," wrote Wilonsky. "They have been replaced by tiny slivers of off-white that peek through rotten gums. His lower teeth, thin and brown, appear ready to fall out if he so much as coughs too hard. His lips are pale and dry, coated with spit so thick it looks like paste. His hair is shorn to the skull; his fingernails, or the spaces where they used to be, are blackened by blood. His feet and ankles and legs are pocked with burns ▶

AXED!

"WANTED: GUITARIST. MUST LIKE FUNK." THE OTHER SIX-STRINGERS WHO ANSWERED THE CALL.



HILLEL SLOVAK

1983-1984 & 1985-1988

Born in Haifa, Israel in 1962, Slovak moved to Los Angeles with his family at the age of five, and started Fairfax High School in the same year as his best friends Jack Irons, Anthony Kiedis and Flea. A fan of Kiss and Queen, Slovak formed Anthym with Irons while still at school, and recruited Flea to play bass in the band in 1978. The original Chili Peppers guitarist, Slovak chose to leave the band in 1984 as his other band What Is This? had secured a record deal. He re-joined the Chilis the following year in time to record 'Freaky Styley'. By then Slovak was an on-off heroin addict. On June 25, 1988 he died from an overdose.

JACK SHERMAN

1984-1985

A gifted LA session musician, Sherman was drafted into the band upon Slovak's departure just weeks before the Chilis were due to record their debut album with producer Andy Gill. Older and more serious than his bandmates, Sherman never fully gelled with his new colleagues, not least because Kiedis and Flea both wanted Slovak back in the group. When the band finished touring their debut album, Kiedis told Sherman he was out. The guitarist returned to session working, playing on albums by Bob Dylan and former Undertones vocalist Feargal Sharkey, but in 1993, after watching his former band explode with 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik', he sued the Chilis for "breach of contract, fraud and malpractice" in seeking compensation for unpaid royalties and damages for his dismissal. The LA Superior Court dismissed the lawsuit in 1994, at which point Anthony Kiedis dismissed Sherman as "a complete asshole".

Where is he now? Working as a session musician in LA.



DUANE 'BLACKBYRD' McKNIGHT

July 1988

A hot-shot guitarist with Chili Pepper favours

Funkadelic/Parliament, McKnight jammed with Kiedis, Flea and former Dead Kennedys drummer DH Peligro in the weeks following Slovak's death and Jack Irons' departure from the band. His days were numbered, however, from the moment Peligro introduced Flea to young Hillel Slovak clone Frusciante.

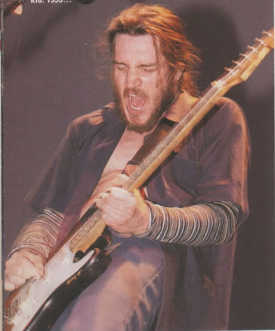
Where is he now? Back with his old boss George Clinton.

ZANDER SCHLOSS

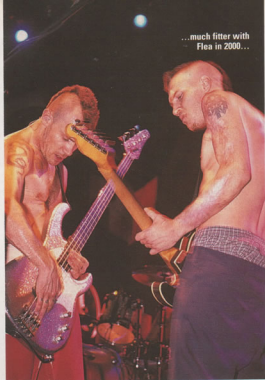
May 1992-June 1992

Upon Frusciante's sudden departure, the Chili Peppers immediately looked to Frusciante's old band Thelonicus Monster (with whom they shared management) ▶

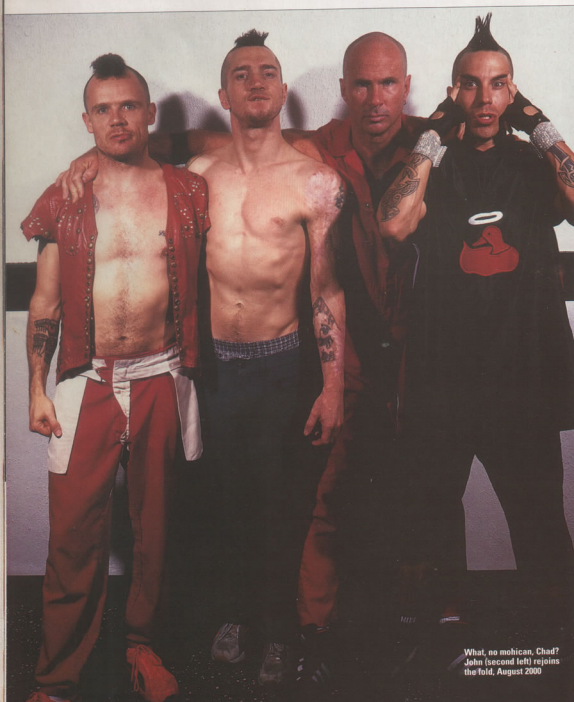
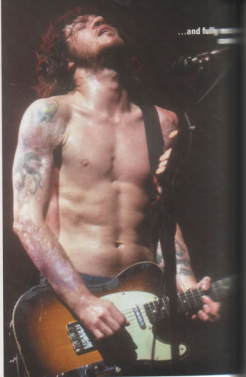
The comeback
kid: 1999...



...much fitter with
Flea in 2000...



...and fully...



from unfiltered Camel cigarette ashes that have fallen unnoticed; his flesh also bears bruises, scabs and scars. He wears an old flannel shirt, only partially buttoned, and khaki pants. Drops of dried blood dot the pants."

If Frusciante was aware of Wilonsky's horrified reactions to his appearance, he certainly did nothing to placate him. "I don't care whether I live or die," he calmly told the reporter.

ASTONISHINGLY, FRUSCIANTE still had further to fall. As he remembers it, 1997 was the worst year of his life. Desperate for cash to feed his addiction, he managed to scrape together enough raw demo tracks to compile a second solo album "Smile From The Streets You Hold", but the album's release gave him no sense of pride or joy.

"I had a year of not feeling like myself, a year of feeling like I was an impostor who didn't deserve to even be called John Frusciante," he told Q magazine in 1999. "I was smoking crack all day long, shooting heroin, shooting cocaine, drinking wine, taking valium. I was this close to killing myself. But when I was going extremely fast in my head and feeling I was about to die I would get these warnings from spirits saying, 'You don't want to die now.'"

Suddenly and without warning, Frusciante returned from the brink. In January '98, the voices in his head told him that if he kept doing drugs he would die. Having previously tried to quit heroin by smoking crack and shooting up cocaine, he decided that he'd just quit drugs cold, promising himself that if he still felt the world was against him in 12 months' time, he'd return to the drugs and calmly wait for death. He checked himself into a California rehab clinic that same month.

Flea was one of the first people to visit. He was delighted to see his old friend on the road to recovery and impressed with Frusciante's mental strength and new outlook. He confessed to Frusciante that 1997 had been a disastrous year for the band and the Chilis, too, were in something of a

What, no mohican, Chad?
John (second left) rejoins
the fold, August 2000

mess. Two years on from the release of 'One Hot Minute', recorded with Frusciante's replacement Dave Navarro, the band had not written a single new song. That summer they decided to regroup to play at one of the Tibetan Freedom Concerts, but they pulled the gig when it was obvious that they were in dire need of more rehearsals. They did manage an appearance at Japan's Fuji Rock festival

with new ideas, fired up with enthusiasm for taking the Chili Peppers to new creative heights.

The Chili Peppers' seventh album 'Californication' was released in June 1999. Musically inventive, warm-hearted and filled with positivity and humanity, it was very much John Frusciante's record. Critics loved the album, radio loved the album, fans loved the album, and for possi-

"John's brown lower teeth appeared ready to fall out if he so much as coughed."

that summer, but their headlining set was curtailed by a freak typhoon. Either side of this farcical gig, Anthony Kiedis and Chad Smith suffered injuries in motorbike crashes, and that autumn both Kiedis and Navarro slipped back into heroin abuse. On a creative level, it was increasingly obvious that Navarro and the band just weren't gelling.

In April '98 Navarro left – or was fired, no one seems entirely sure. Flea told Kiedis and Smith that if they didn't at least try to get Frusciante back into the band, he too was leaving. Kiedis was sceptical about the idea. Smith was astonished. "The last thing I knew he was ready to die," the drummer stated bluntly. But both agreed to give it a try. That spring, the four men reconvened for the first time in six years, to rehearse in Flea's garage.

"The chemistry was bombastic and beautiful," Kiedis admitted. "All that resentment just evaporated instantly. It's like a boyfriend-girlfriend thing. Sometimes you're so f**king hurt by somebody that you won't allow yourself to be friends with them. It doesn't mean that deep down you don't love them. But, you know... ego. Ego and mind games."

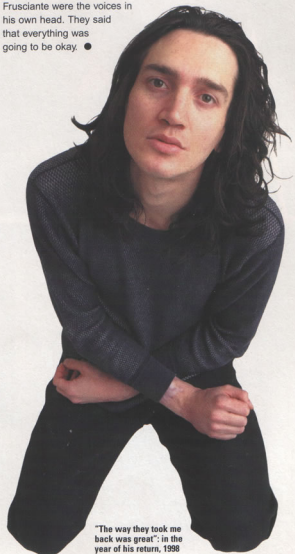
"It was great," Frusciante agreed. "The way they took me back made me feel good about myself. I had very little ability, but it didn't matter to them, it was just the spirit of what I was doing and the fact that it was me. It felt good to have friends who really believed in me, when no one else did."

JOHN FRUSCIANTE'S rehabilitation was a slow and painful affair. He had skin grafts to mask the countless abscess scars on his arms, and \$70,000 worth of dental work to turn what looked like a mouthful of broken crockery back into a beaming smile, but the real transformation had already occurred internally. He officially re-joined the Red Hot Chili Peppers on June 12, 1998, walking onstage with them at Washington DC's 9:30 Club to play a warm-up show for the band's appearance at the third Tibetan Freedom Concert in the city's RFK Stadium two days later.

Back in Flea's garage as that summer unfolded, it was clear that he was bursting

by the first time, the Chili Peppers began to sell to people who had never felt the need to have a rock album – much less a Chili Peppers album – in their lives before. Those who understood the band's history were universal in reading the album as a personal triumph for John Frusciante, a symbol of his miraculous personal resurrection.

As ever, the hyperbole and acclaim washed right over him. As ever, the only voices that mattered to John Frusciante were the voices in his own head. They said that everything was going to be okay. ●



"The way they took me back was great", in the year of his return, 1998

for his replacement. Formerly bassist with original LA hardcore band The Circle Jerks, Schloss was a cult hero in punk rock circles for his role in Alex Cox's 'Repo Man', in which he played Emilio Estevez's mate Kevin. Despite rehearsing with the band for a few weeks in LA, Schloss never officially joined the Peppers.

Where is he now? Composing film scores and working as a session musician in LA, when not joining The Circle Jerks on sporadic reunion shows.



ARIK MARSHALL

June 1992–August 1992

Nicknamed 'The Freak',

Marshall certainly walked and talked like a Chili Pepper when plucked from LA bar band Marshall Law to replace John Frusciante just three weeks before the band's 1992 Lollapalooza headlining tour, cockily telling journalists, "I figured these guys were gonna check me out." "It's all about the music," he said.

"You just come in with your vibe and put it on the table. We all just love to play, it's really that simple." Things looked good for Marshall when Anthony Kiedis was telling anyone who'd listen that the guitarist "smokes like a madman on guitar". However, immediately after completing the 27-date Lollapalooza tour – and appearing in the video for 'Breaking The Girl' – the guitarist was asked to leave.

Where is he now? Playing with his brother Lonnie 'Megan' Marshall in funk-metalers Weapon Of Choice, formerly signed to Stone Gossard's Loosegroove label. The band's new album 'Illuminuity' is available only online.



JESSE TOBIAS

July 1993–August 1993

Having moved from his native Texas to LA in search of a record deal with his band

Mother Tongue, Tobias was recruited to the Chilis by Anthony Kiedis. He barely had time to plug in his guitar FX rack before he was shown the door.

Where is he now? Playing guitar with Alanis Morissette. Tobias also appears on the new album by former Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dull's new band Twilight Singers.



DAVE NAVARRO

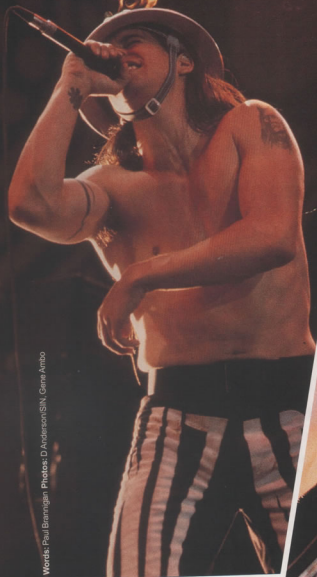
September 1993–April 1998

When former Jane's Addiction guitarist signed up with the Chili Peppers, it looked like a

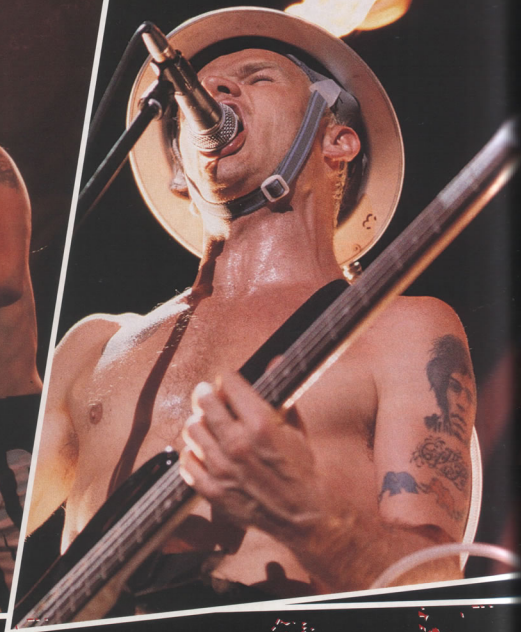
match made in heaven. Navarro had been friends with Flea since the Chilis bassist contributed trumpet parts to 'Idiot's Rule' on Jane's second album 'Nothing's Shocking'. Having been privy to a lifetime of decadence in Jane's, Navarro wasn't phased by the Peppers' lifestyle, but his more methodical, studied approach to songwriting didn't sit easily with his bandmates' more spontaneous method and, after five years of faithful service, he stepped aside/ was pushed aside to make way for Frusciante's return to the fold.

Where is he now? Touring the world with the re-formed Jane's Addiction. (See also: feature page 82)

[LOLLAPALOOZA]



Words: Paul Bannigan. Photos: D Anderson/SN, Gene Ambro



FEEL THE

With 'BloodSugarSexMagik' in the can, the Red Hot Chili Peppers wanted to deliver the music direct to the American public. Lollapalooza '92 was the perfect opportunity.

ONCE INSIDE the gates, there was no shortage of options. You might care to step into the 'Crush Cage', and smash up a couple of old TV sets with the sledgehammer provided. You might grab a drumstick and join 24 other people inside The Rhythm Beast, to batter out post-industrial tattoos on metal hubcaps, corrugated iron and steel pipes. You might fancy giving the 'Safe Sex Wheel Of Fortune' a spin, to try to win a T-shirt, or a CD, or a packet of condoms. You might check out one of the political action booths - Rock The Vote, No More Censorship, PETA, the AIDS Action Group - or go see a skinny freak called Mr Lifo hanging unfeasibly heavy weights from his penis at the

Red Hot Chili
Helmets:
turning up the heat with
the Lollapalooza
encore
party-piece



BURN!

Jim Rose Circus Sideshow. Alternatively, you might just prefer to get a nipple pierced, or a tattoo inked, then grab a beer and kick back with your buddies, as four men with flaming helmets on their heads cemented their reputation as *the* hottest band in the country. Welcome to Lollapalooza 1992.

AS HIS OLD FRIEND Dave Navarro put down the phone with a firm, but not unfriendly, "Thanks, but no thanks", Chili Peppers bassist Flea realised that he needed a Plan B, and quickly: The second Lollapalooza festival tour was scheduled to kick off at the Shoreline



[LOLLAPALOOZA]

Amphitheater in San Francisco on July 18, and with tickets for the 37-date trek selling like hotcakes, withdrawing from the headlining slot was not an option for Flea's band... even if they still were a man short after John Frusciante's exit, back in May.

In retrospect, Flea could understand why Navarro didn't want to accept his invitation to join the Peppers for Lollapalooza. The first Lollapalooza tour, in the summer of 1991, had marked not only the end of Navarro's band Jane's Addiction, but the nadir of his long friendship with JA frontman Perry Farrell, who'd initiated the idea of taking a travelling 'alternative rock' festival across America. Deep down, Navarro knew (as Flea

knew) that he could work with the Peppers. But he couldn't do it right now.

Enter Arik Marshall, aka 'The Freak', just 20 days before the first date on the Lollapalooza tour. A former member of unsigned LA funk-rockers Marshall Law, Marshall certainly looked and talked like a Pepper when first thrust into the public eye. And he was impressively blasé, not to say cocky, about being plucked from obscurity to play guitar with the band.

"I figured these guys were gonna check me out," he told Kerrang!. "We've always known each other, the guys would come and check out my old band. It's all about the music."

"We'd seen Arik playing around for a

while, didn't know him very well but liked playing," Flea added. "He's turned out to be really nice guy and an incredible guitar player."

The Peppers practised for five hours to get Marshall up to speed for Lollapalooza and took care not to dwell upon their own concerns about headlining the tour. As Kiedis and Flea had attended the festival in 1991, and were blown away by the vibe of the day, but the singer was concerned bill they'd be topping – a bill which included grunge rock's new rising stars Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Chicago's industrial metal drug buckets Ministry and none-more-b-

A few dates in, the band realised this was no ordinary tour when they saw people bursting into tears at the sight of their faces.

Scottish shoegazers The Jesus And Mary Chain – was "way too male" and "way too tar-oriented". He was also none too happy that when he'd asked for Perry Farrell's phone number to discuss the tour direction he'd been instructed to fax his concerns to Farrell via the festival's booking agency. Nevertheless, as July 18 approached, Kiedis was certain that his new-look band was ready.

"I woke up in the middle of the night the other night," he told Kerrang!. "I was naked, I put on my sunglasses and a Led Zeppelin record and I did a little Zeppelin dance in a mirror, thinking about how exciting it'd be to take the stage for the first Lollapalooza shows. We're going to rock Lollapalooza."

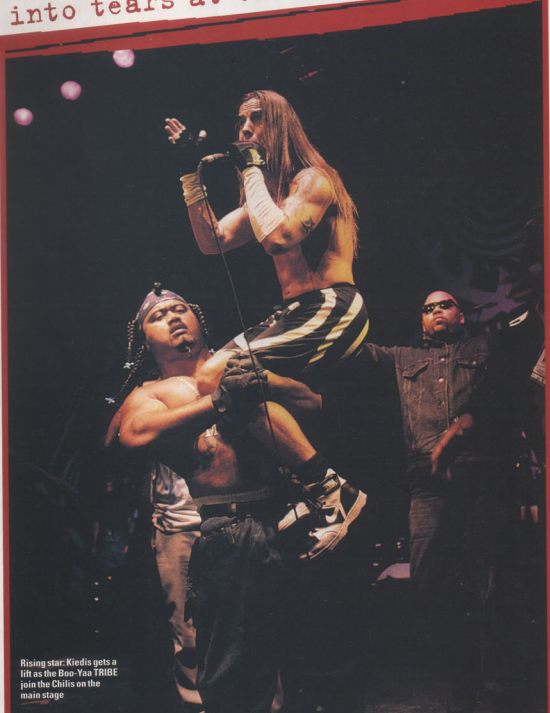
A FEW dates into the tour, the Chili Peppers camp realised that this was going to be an ordinary expedition. The band were being asked to sign their names on clothes belonging to fans' babies, they were mobbed when they went out in public, they witnessed people bursting into tears at the sight of their faces.

"It's completely insane how one song can make such a difference," mused Flea.

"Under The Bridge", the second single from 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik', was released to radio in the US in the spring of 1992, the first week of June, the song had climbed to Number 2 on the 'Billboard' Hot 100. Suddenly, it seemed everyone in America knew who the Red Hot Chili Peppers were. And after almost 10 years, the band were going to piss and moan about that.

"You get little girls at the airport saying stuff like 'I love your album, 'Under The Bridge',", laughed Chad Smith. "You know they only know that one f**king song, but what's so bad about that? All it means is they'll hopefully get into more of our music. But is there pressure? And am I angry at all those people know us for? Hell no, I'm having a good time."

"Now," added Kiedis, "we've got the



Lollapalooza line-up
 (from left): Smith,
 Kiedis, Flea, Marshall
 — Arik clearly a novice
 at 'horseplay'

attention of the world focused on the music that we make."

With the Peppers and Pearl Jam both in the upper reaches of the US charts, it was no surprise that ticket sales were so good. But with the high-profile stature of many of the bands involved, some began to question just how 'alternative' the tour really was.

"It's sort of an alternative lie, you know?" said Soundgarden guitarist Kim Thayil. "The demographic of its audience is white suburban kids between the ages of 18 and 24. It's not that alternative. I've seriously seen more economic and social stratification at Guns N' Roses concerts."

Flea agreed: "I was hoping there would be more of a mixed audience. With Ice Cube on the bill, I was hoping there would be more black people. But it seems like the Ice Cube fans don't even know about the show because it wasn't marketed at all to the black community. Segregation runs right through the music industry."

Still, there were occasions when the musicians themselves struck a blow for the cross-cultural values that Perry Farrell had claimed Lollapalooza was based upon. One such moment occurred on the festival's second stage during a set by LA-based Samoan rappers Boo-Yaa TRIBE. While the band's drummer kept the beat, Flea picked up a bass, Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard and Ministry's Al Jourgensen joined in and grabbed a guitar each and New York rapper Bronx Style Bob began spitting out freestyle rymes. Only a handful of fans actually saw this spontaneous moment, but it meant a lot to those involved.

"It was cool," said Flea. "I wish there was more of that kind of thing around."

ULTIMATELY, THOUGH, the majority of Chill Peppers fans didn't really care about spontaneous all-star jam sessions; all they cared about was whether the Peppers could put it live with their new guitarist. And on that score no one was disappointed.



Arik and Chad get in some basketball practice. Chad fouling quite egregiously... again!

Marshall may not have had time to develop the telepathic understanding that Frusciante brought to the group's best performances, but in Kiedis' words, he was a "smoking" guitarist, and a born entertainer.

The Chills would commonly play 17 or 18 songs a night, mixing up the best of 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik' and 'Mother's Milk', with cover versions of Jimi Hendrix's 'Crossroads Traffic', Bob Dylan's 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' and Neil Young's 'The Needle And The Damage Done' and long-standing live favourites such as 'Me And My Friends' and 'Special Secret Song Inside' aka 'Party On Your Pussy'. And for those 90 minutes each night, the band were *untouchable*.

Lollapalooza 1991 — which had seen

Farrell's Jane's Addiction share a stage with Nine Inch Nails, Henry Rollins, Siouxsie And The Banshees and Ice-T — had grossed almost \$9 million over 23 dates, with 92 per cent of all tickets available sold. By the time the third of three sold-out shows at Los Angeles' Irvine Meadows brought the curtain down on Lollapalooza 1992, the 37 shows had pulled in \$19.1 million, with 97 per cent of all tickets sold. No Lollapalooza tour since has been more profitable, or more critically acclaimed.

For Arik Marshall, who was sent packing within days of the final show on September 13, the tour would represent only a fleeting brush with fame. For the other Chili Peppers, it was merely a taster of the superstardom which lay ahead. ●

CHAD SMITH

DRUMMER, 1988-PRESENT

FIFTEEN YEARS living in California has done nothing to dilute Chad Smith's Midwestern metal tendencies. While his ex-junkie bandmates now talk yoga, macrobiotic diets and spiritual enlightenment, Chad's life continues to revolve around beer, getting laid and hitting things hard. Rock'n'roll might well be a filthy business, but that's just how Chad likes it.

GROWING UP "I ran away from home when I was 15. I was a bit of a stoner back then. I had a black Labrador called Bong who followed me the whole summer while I lived in cars and other people's homes. When I came home my mother sent me to a Catholic boarding school. They kept the dog and shortened his name to Bo."

"I use my celebrity. I'm like, 'Hi, I'm Chad from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Want to come backstage? Works every time.'"

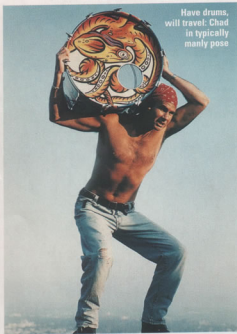
SCHOOL "I wasn't dumb, but the teachers didn't like me. I used to disrupt class."

PLAYING TRUANT "I didn't really attend school. I attended the parking lot, smoked pot and listened to Rush 8-Tracks in my friend's car."

FAME "I enjoy being somewhat anonymous and only being recognised by real fans of our band."

DRUGS "I'm not tortured. I wasn't an addict. I didn't lose my shit."

ALCOHOL "My favourite drink is a buttery nipple. It's anise and butterscotch schnapps. It sounds like



Here drums, will travel: Chad in typically manly pose

a pussy drink, but it's kind of sweet and easy to drink."

GOD "I don't put a face on God. So he would probably look like Jimi Hendrix."

DAVE NAVARRO "When Dave was all fucked-up I bailed out of the Spread project he and I were doing together because I couldn't work with him any more. He was out of his fucking mind. I was like, 'Dude, you've got to kick it back a notch or 12'. It's all cool now. I love Dave, he's a good guy."

ENGLAND "They really like us in England these days. What the fuck? What happened?"

SEX "I use my celebrity the whole time. I'm like, 'Hi, I'm Chad from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Want to come to the show and maybe backstage afterwards?' Works every time."

SUCCESS "It's easier for us now because we're just big, bourgeois rock stars and everything comes to us, everything is done for us. Things are paid for, people pick you up, everyone's really nice to you. We live in this little bubble which is not really a good representation of everyday life. It's incredible, we're pampered little babies. We're spoilt brats."

SOCKS ON COCKS "Oh God, we've done it so many times. It's like Kiss putting the make-up back on. Give us \$100 million for the reunion tour of 2022. We'll do it in every town. You won't be able to see the socks under our fat bellies, but it'll be on."

WOMEN "I like women... they are a weakness."

FUNK "Funk is everywhere. Life is funky. People, situations, language, culture, movies, art, my motorcycle, scuba diving, many things are funky."

ROCK'N'ROLL "About 99.5 per cent of the music that's out there is predictable, generic, lame shit. But with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the music is honest and raw and from the heart."

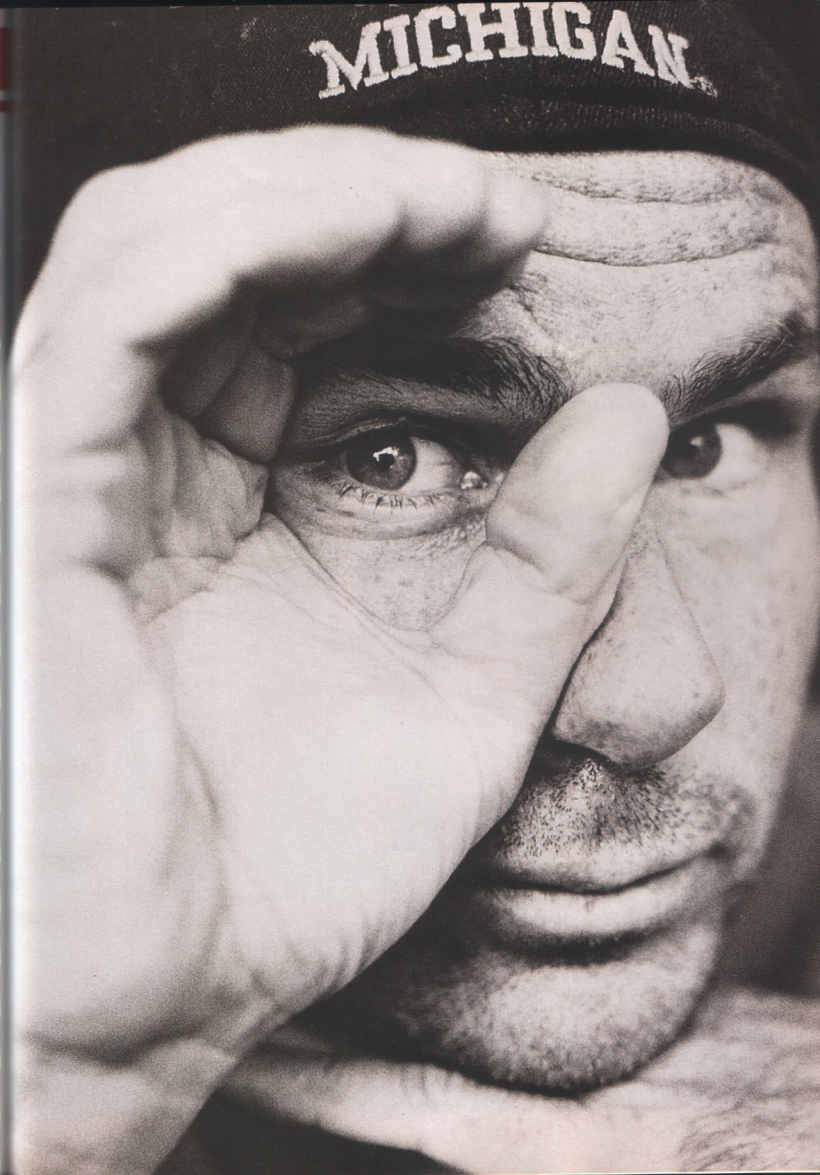
THE FUTURE "I just want to play. We can still continue to create good music. No matter what we do – fast, slow, hard, soft – it still sounds like us, which I think is a cool thing."

DEATH "I want to go quick and easy. Probably in a bad motorbike accident."

CHAD FACTS!

- Born October 25, 1962 in St Pauls, Minnesota
- Chad Smith began playing drums at the age of seven, graduating from using Baskin-Robbins ice cream cartons. His first band, Rockin' Conspiracy, also featured his older brother Brad.
- Chad lost his virginity at 13 to a girl called Jackie Coccanian. "A one-night stand in the back-seat of a car type of thing," he says.
- In 1990, Smith and Flea were found guilty of battery after spanking a young female fan at an MTV party in Florida. The pair's fine went to a rape crisis centre.
- Smith's previous jobs have included stints at a pancake house, a paint company and Gap. He was fired from all three.
- Pre-Chilis, Smith played mainly in metal bands whose names began with a 'T' – including Tilt, Tyrant, Terence, Toby Redd. The latter released an album on RCA Records and are still playing today.
- Chad wore a Guns N'Roses T-shirt when he auditioned for the Chili Peppers. He was the 30th drummer to play with the band that day. "As soon as he sat down, it was like a herd of psychedelic gorillas," Kiedis marvelled.
- Away from the band, Smith's main hobbies are scuba diving, riding his Harley Road King and playing softball. His favourite baseball team is the Detroit Tigers.
- Chad has two daughters, Manon and Ava and a son, Justin.
- Smith has broken his wrist twice, once in a motorbike accident and once playing softball. On both occasions the Chilis had to cancel tours.
- In 2001, Smith paid "thousands of dollars" to buy a floor tom belonging to his hero, The Who's Keith Moon. "That's a piece of fucking history right there!" he says.
- Chad rejoined in the nickname Chalk, derived from his habit of telling pool-playing partners that the chalk was located up his ass.

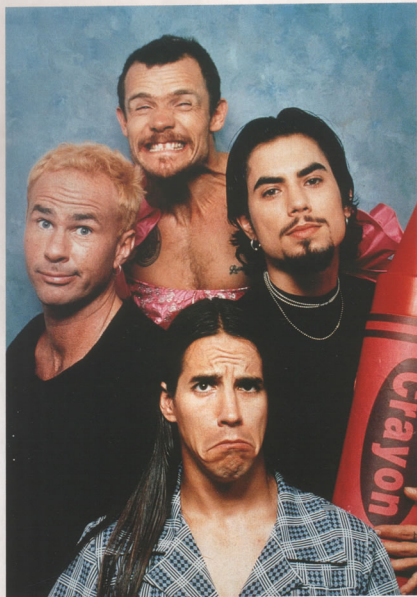
MICHIGAN



[THE PICTURES]

HIGHER GROUND [1991- 1995]

Guitarists come and go, but the Red Hot Chili Peppers enjoy the best of times. The worst are soon to follow.



◀ ONE HOT MINUTE
Album artwork
out-take, 1995

▶ FLEA
By Julio Estrada
Los Angeles,
February 1983

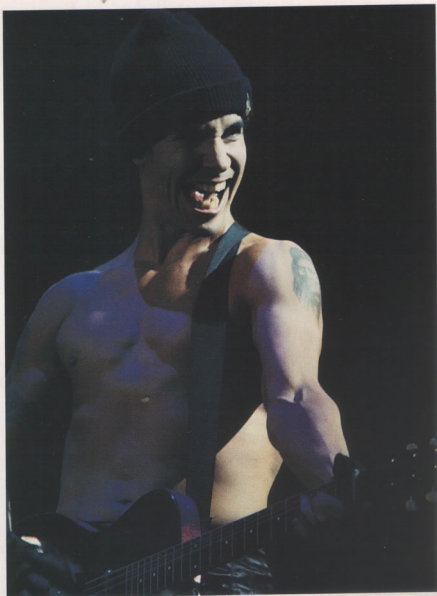






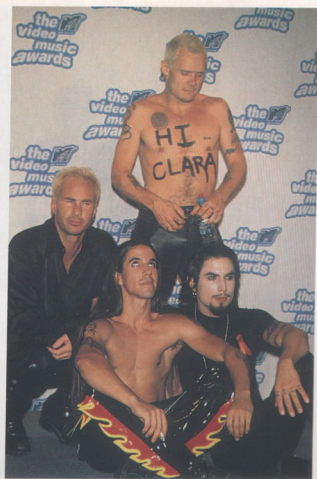
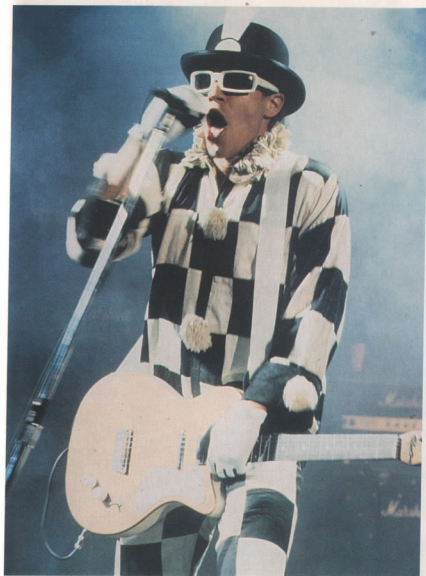
▶ **ANTHONY KIEDIS**
By Paul Stanley
Reading Festival,
August 1994

▼ **FLEA, DAVE GAHAN
(DEPECHE MODE)
AND KIEDIS**
By Kevn Mazur
MTV Awards,
New York 1993



▼ SMITH, KIEDIS, FLEA, FRUSCIANTE AND FRIEND
By Mark Seliger
June 1992





◀ ANTHONY KIEDIS
By Steve Double
Lollapalooza, 1992

▲ MESSAGE FOR
FLEA'S DAUGHTER
By Bill Davila
MTV Awards, 1995

▼ MASKED MEN
By Robert Mathew
Hollywood,
August 1991





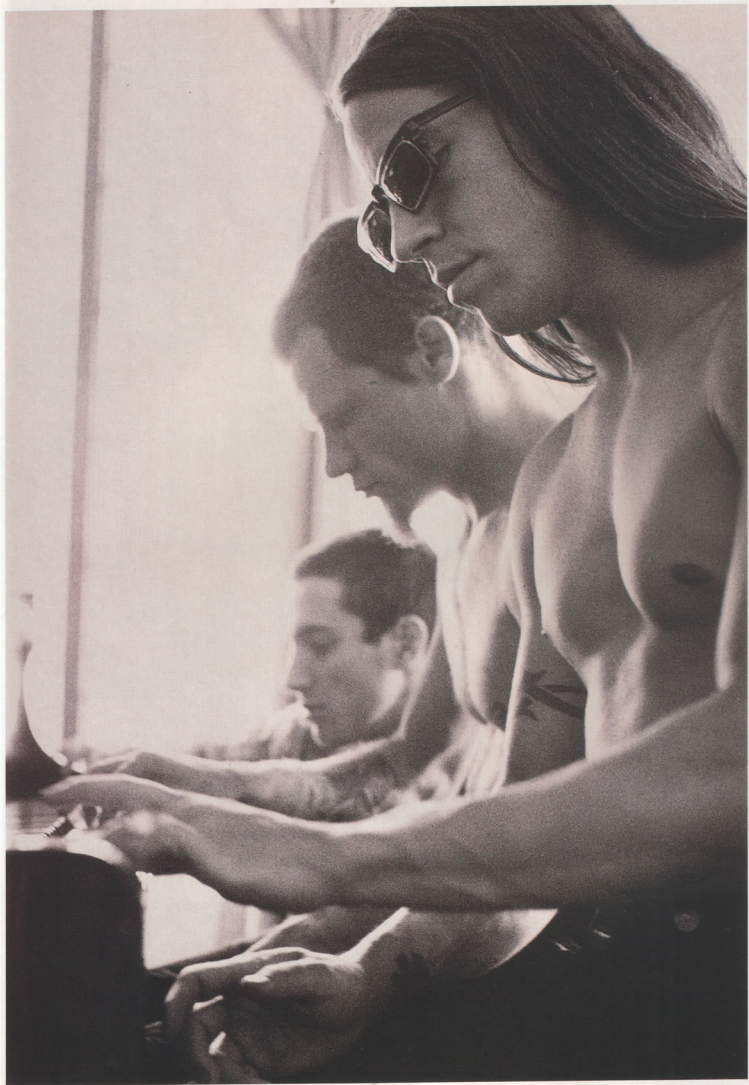
◀ **KIEDIS AND MADONNA**
By Kevin Mazur
MTV Awards,
New York, 1995

▼ **SMITH, FLEA, NAVARRO
AND KIEDIS**
By Steve Double
Hollywood, c1995

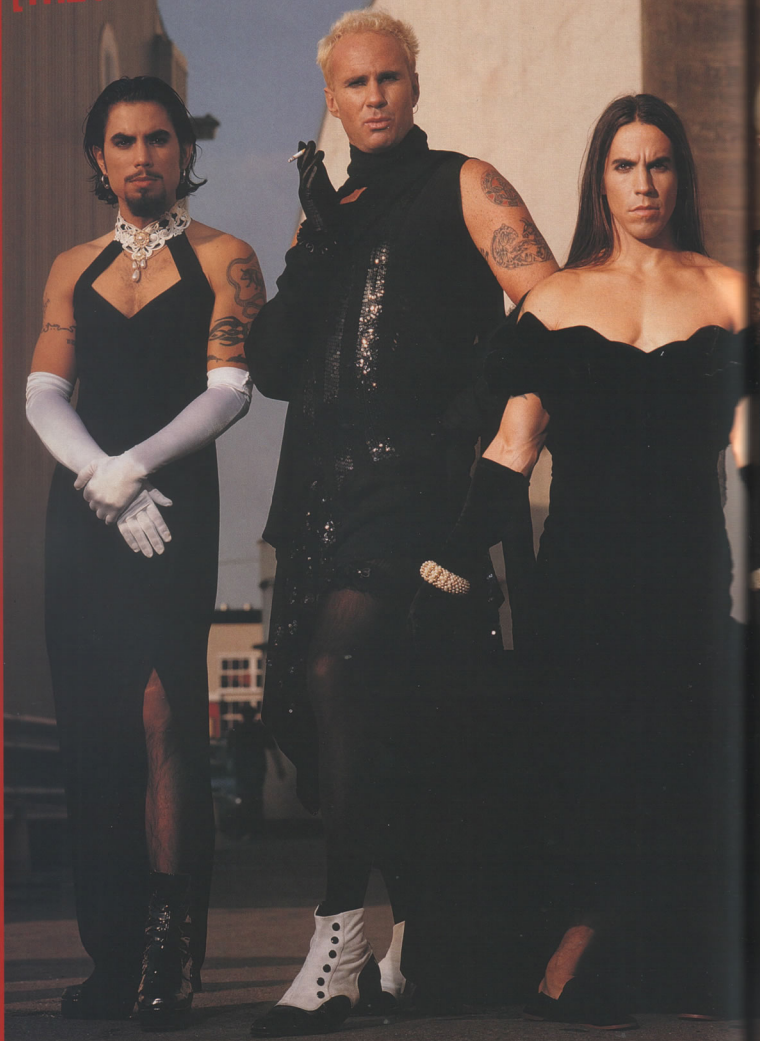
▲ **KIEDIS AND CINDY
CRAWFORD**
By Anita Bugge
MTV Awards,
New York, 1993

▶ **REHEARSING FOR
BLOODSUGARSEX**
By Michael Tighe
Hollywood, 1991





[THE NAVARRO YEARS]





Words: Simon Young Photo: Richard Faulks

Glamour boys

WITH EDGY NEW
GUITARIST DAVE
NAVARRO ON BOARD,
THE RHCP MULTI-
PLATINUM GROOVE
MACHINE COULD
ONLY GET BIGGER
AND BETTER, RIGHT?
WRONG. VERY,
VERY WRONG...

AUGUST 14, 1994. The Red Hot Chili Peppers are about to take the stage at the huge Woodstock II festival. Not only is this the biggest gig of their 11-year career, apart from a club warm-up show, it's the first time they've played in public with new guitarist Dave Navarro. And they're about to do it dressed as giant light bulbs.

For a band who have, at various points over the past decade, performed stark naked, wearing socks over their genitals, daubed in Day-Glo paint, or in any combination of the three, this is no big deal. For Navarro – a man who made his name with moody, magnificent LA art-rockers Jane's Addiction, a band not renowned for such cartoon behaviour – it is a very big deal. After making his feelings known, he's agreed to do it, in his words, "for team spirit". But he knows he's not going to like it.

Twelve months later, Navarro looks back on it and shudders. "My first major compromise was at Woodstock," he tells 'Alternative Press' magazine. "I hadn't performed in front of an audience that size in years, and I was feeling self-conscious about the show. Then they told me about the giant light bulb costumes. They were hot, impossible to see out of, and ridiculous-looking. No one had ever asked me to wear such an asinine costume before, but I sucked it up and toed the company line."

Despite his better judgement, Navarro did indeed stand in front of 250,000 people at Woodstock dressed as a giant light bulb. He hid inside his "uniform" and simply started playing. "By the time I emerged from the costume, my fear had subsided," he recalled.

Barely a year into his tenure as guitarist with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Dave Navarro was already pulling in a different direction. It might have been the first time, but it certainly wasn't the last.

NOT EVERYONE in the band may have been entirely comfortable with the delivery, but for the Chili Peppers as a whole, Woodstock was a significant victory. The past few years had been one of the most dramatic periods in the career of a band whose history seemed to consist entirely of dramatic moments.

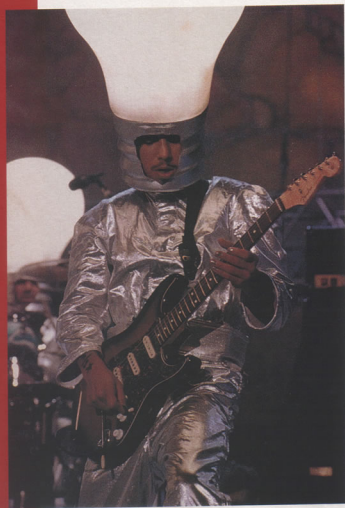
The 'BloodSugarSexMagik' album in 1991 had been an artistic and commercial high point for the band, but it had also brought with it a new set of problems. Foremost among these was the departure of guitarist John Frusciante in May 1992. Ill-equipped to deal with the pressures of fame, the 22-year-old Frusciante had walked out on the band at the start of a Japanese tour, leaving them with no option but to cancel the remaining dates and return to LA.

With touring commitments still ahead of them, the remaining three members hurriedly auditioned a string of potential replacements, settling on Arik Marshall, a member of LA outfit Marshall Law and an acquaintance of Flea's. Marshall played with the band on their headlining stint on that year's Lollapalooza tour, but, according to the bassist, it soon became apparent that "the chemistry and camaraderie a band like the Chili Peppers needs to survive just wasn't there", and Marshall was out.

Once again a three-piece, the Chilis decided to take a different approach to recruiting a guitarist who could and would work with them. The band placed a 'Wanted' ad in local newspaper 'The LA Weekly'. Within 24 hours, more than 5,000 hopeful candidates had responded.

After countless auditions and much deliberation, the band picked

[THE NAVARRO YEARS]

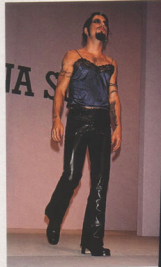


Dave Navarro at Woodstock, 1994: hang on lads, I've got an idea...

Jesse Tobias, formerly of little-known Californian outfit Mother Tongue, to be their new guitarist. Tobias seemed to fit the bill perfectly: he was young, lithe and a slick player. Unfortunately for the band, he didn't work out either. Even by their standards, his tenure was short: just a month after he joined, Tobias was no longer a Red Hot Chili Pepper.

For a band of their stature, the Chili Peppers were in a ridiculous position. Unable to secure the services of a suitable, stable guitarist, things were beginning to look desperate. Enter David Michael Navarro.

Dressed to impress, Navarro on the Anna Sui catwalk, New York Fashion Week, October 1996



NAVARRO HAD known the Red Hot Chili Peppers since the mid-'80s. With Jane's Addiction, he'd played the same clubs and got wasted at the same parties as Anthony Kiedis and co; Flea had even contributed blasts of trumpet to "Idiot's Rule", from Jane's breakthrough album, "Nothing's Shocking".

Navarro's background was impressively dysfunctional, even by the standards of the Los Angeles rock community. He was born on June 7 to Mike and Constance Navarro; seven years later, his parents split. Divorce aside, Navarro's early years were relatively incident-free. He took piano lessons and was given an acoustic guitar by his father; introduced to the music of Jimi Hendrix at the age of 12, he decided that a career in music sounded interesting. He was a quiet, if pessimistic, kid at school. Despite this, his teachers called him "Uncle David", on account of the fact that he was the person that his classmates would come to if they had a problem.

But there was a dark side. Years later, he recalled how, as a youngster, he'd cut open his fingers with razor blades to watch the blood drop on a bathroom mirror, or pull the taste buds off his tongue with tweezers and line them up on the sink. "That was how I vented my rage," was his explanation.

In March 1983, Navarro's world was turned upside down. One night while Dave was out, his mother's boyfriend came to the house and brutally murdered both Constance and her sister, also there that night. It would be more than a decade before police caught the killer.

"When I was 15, my mother and my aunt were murdered by someone that I loved and trusted," he said in 1995. "It's kind of a powerful message to send to an evolving mind. I mean, a guy that I'd known for five

years broke into my house and shot them. It was shown to me very early that things can happen that you can't possibly imagine."

To deal with his shock at the tragedy, Navarro immersed himself in music. He formed a band, Dizastre, with a school friend named Stephen Perkins, and education slipped down his list of priorities.

"I wasn't into sports, and I wasn't into chasing skirts," said Navarro. "I had a lot of stuff bottled up inside me, and the only way I could get it out was if I sat in my room and played guitar. Maybe I wasn't trying to fill a void, I was trying to heal a void."

Music wasn't the only thing he was using to heal that void. After his mother's death, Navarro began a serious and longstanding relationship with drugs. He started with pot, before stepping up to cocaine, heroin and tranquilizers. In 1984, a combination of bad grades and worsening drug use resulted in him being expelled from school. He subsequently enrolled at another school, only to quit that in one of his own volition before he could graduate.

IN MARCH 1986, Navarro received a call from Stephen Perkins. The drummer had quit Dizastre a few months previously to joining Jane's Addiction. Jane's were already underground legends in LA. Led by shamanic frontman Perry Farrell, they were carving out an alternative scene that couldn't have been further away from the cock rock explosion occurring elsewhere in Hollywood. Theirs was a unique sound: a cocktail of Led Zeppelin bombast, edgy psychedelia and art-rock sensibilities, spiked with Farrell's innate propensity for provocation and a large helping of pharmaceuticals. And now, Perkins informed Navarro, they were looking for a new guitarist. Unsurprisingly, Navarro jumped at the chance. For a teenager

whose life revolved entirely around music and narcotics, this was as close to home as it got.

Jane's rise and self-inflicted fall was dizzying in its velocity. Between 1987 and 1990, they released three albums that played a large part in helping all-rock infiltrate the mainstream. In 1991, Farrell announced the launch of the Lollapalooza festival. As well as being a travelling showcase for the finest talents the burgeoning alternative nation had to offer (Nine Inch Nails, Rollins Band, Ice-T), it was also set up to serve another purpose: driven apart by drugs and seemingly irreconcilable personal differences, this would be Jane's Addiction's farewell tour.

The final Lollapalooza show took place in Hawaii on September 27, 1991. After it finished, the band went

Navarro (far right) in Jane's Addiction in 1990





Navarro relaxes at home in front of Eddie Adams' famous Vietnam War photo

separate ways without so much as a goodbye. Just 24, and with a CV that included membership of one of the most innovative bands on the planet, Navarro's next move was eagerly awaited. Back in LA, he reunited with Jane's Addiction bassist Eric Avery. Their new project, which he informed the press, would be called "The Smog." For the next year, they worked on a new album that would, unlooked for, be shelved. In 1992, he speculated, pick up where Jane's left off (it would eventually come out in 1994, after the project had been disbanded). Then, in the first half of 1993, he and the other bands ask Dave Navarro to join them, both of which he turned down. One of the bands was Jane's Addiction, the other was the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

then go, 'Sorry, I can't do it'. So I had lowered my anticipations of him ever joining."

While the frontman was reluctant to continue with his overtures, Chad Smith wasn't so easily dissuaded. Worn down to the point of exasperation by the audition process — "I'd played with so many bad musicians for two months, it was horrible..." — the drummer insisted Kiedis try again. Remarkably, this time the offer was accepted. On September 5, 1993, Dave Navarro officially became a member of the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

"I EXPECTED THEM TO BE FUNKY, WACKY, FUNNY, CUTE... THANKFULLY, I WAS WRONG" - DAVE NAVARRO

AFTER THE departure of Arik Marshall in September 1993, the Red Hot Chili Peppers were, in the words of Anthony Kiedis, "very confused as to what we were looking for in a guitar player." The singer knew that Navarro could be the answer to all their problems; the only glitch being that Navarro was having none of it. "I'd call up Dave and say, 'We're in some trouble here. We don't have a guitar player, and you're the only guy we can think of that we wanna play with'. He'd build me up and say, 'There's no other guitarist in the world capable of filling that role except me', and

Despite Kiedis' conviction, not to mention their shared heritage as part of LA's proto-alt rock scene, it was an odd union. For starters, Navarro was an unlikely partner. "The truth is that I'm not much of a funk fan," he admitted. "I'm more into dark music, whether it's rock or classical." Second, he confessed that he had never owned a Chili Peppers record. Then there was the guitarist's own perception of his new bandmates.

"I had a stereotypical notion of this

band," said Navarro a few months after joining. "I expected them to be funky, wacky, funny, cute — all of the things that I generally don't have in my personal existence. Thankfully, I was wrong."

IF EITHER party was nervous about how the relationship would proceed, they weren't letting on. The gameplan was that their different approaches — the Chillies' funky, earthy, energetic; Navarro cool, psychedelic, slightly removed — could be combined to create something fresh and surprising.

"Dave didn't come into this band wanting to change himself to fit in with us, and we didn't want him to," said Anthony Kiedis. "We wanted to make something new together. We knew that it would take someone that didn't want to play what they thought the Red Hot Chili Peppers were supposed to sound like." The guitarist had made it clear that he didn't want to replicate the Chili Peppers' old sound. Even for someone as assured as Navarro, that was easier said than done. "It wasn't cut and dried," the guitarist would recall. "I tiptoed the first couple of weeks, until I felt more comfortable. But my comfort level had nothing to do with them. It had to do with me." ▶

[THE NAVARRO YEARS]



Photo: AFP/Justin Hill/Contrasto

In truth, Navarro had entered the picture at an awkward point. The aftermath of the 'BloodSugarSexMagik' tour was still affecting the band. After the insanity of that last tour, Flea had gone through something close to a nervous breakdown.

"I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, and as soon as the tour was over, I let my body relax for a second and I just crashed," said the bassist. "I was sick all the time, my immune system was fucked up, I couldn't get out of bed and I felt like shit. Emotionally, I was really down. I felt very sad, very lonely, very distrustful, and I just didn't want to be around anyone. I was a mess."

Such was the extent of his problems that even when Navarro came on board, nine months after the 'BloodSugarSexMagik' tour ended, the bassist hadn't fully recovered.

Flea: "When Dave first joined the band, there was this initial awkward phase. It was really difficult, cos I was having a hard time with emotional and physical problems. And Dave was having a hard time joining a new band. We nearly imploded, and it nearly didn't work."

Rehearsals were strained. There was friction as Flea and his new guitarist clashed. The former actually left the band on two separate occasions.

"There was a day when I just thought, 'F**k it, I quit' and walked out of the studio. I sat down on the corner for an hour, a block away. Then I went back and said, 'Guys, I'm sorry.' I was just really f**ked up."

IN FEBRUARY 1994, the band decided to try a different course of action. They flew to Hawaii, where they rented houses, rode bikes, went scuba diving and swimming with dolphins, and wrote songs.

"They were some pretty heavy bonding things," Navarro said later.

Relationships between the band members improved. But even then, things weren't going to plan. Kiedis was struggling with his muse; he'd been writing lyrics and melodies for the past few months, but he soon reached a creative impasse – a "spiritual block", according to the singer.

"Until I dealt with that, I couldn't really free myself up for creative purposes. I went through some pretty muddled times during the process of making the record."

Rumours began to circulate that the "muddled times" were a result of the singer having started to use heroin again, and that he had been forced to go into rehab. While Kiedis has never openly admitted to relapsing, he has alluded to having "survived a huge personal, catastrophic tragedy".

The cause may have been murky, but the outcome was clear: the recording of the Chili's sixth album was a painful, protracted process. The fact that working titles for the record included 'The Blight Album', 'The Good And Bad Moods Of The Red Hot Chili

Peppers' and 'Hypersensitive' said it all.

Eventually, in the summer of 1995 – some months after the Chili's had played a 12-date tour that took in both Woodstock II and a headlining appearance at the UK's Reading Festival – the Chili Peppers finished their new album. No one was more relieved than Anthony Kiedis.

"I've been on a blistering rollercoaster ride of mental ups and downs," said the singer. "It's been a tragic and miraculous struggle of love to get this record done. But for us, that's what it takes to make beautiful and powerful pieces of work."

Asked for five words to describe the record, Flea replied: "Miserable. Ecstatic. Miserable. Ecstatic. Miserable."

"One Hot Minute" finally emerged on September 12, 1995, a year after it was originally due. On the surface, the Chili Peppers seemed unconcerned at the delay.

"We are, to some degree, impervious to outside pressures," said Anthony Kiedis when asked about the prolonged gestation period. "Warners never once called up and said, 'Where the f**k is the record?'"

Dave Navarro was less pleased. Asked if he had any funny stories from recording the album, the guitarist darkly replied: "How f**king long it took to make. That was pretty f**king hilarious."

"One Hot Minute" was by far the most emotionally diverse set the Chili Peppers had put their name too: blissed-out and funky one minute, bleakly furious and funk-free the next. As envisaged, the mixture of personalities had clearly shaped the record; what was surprising was just how overwhelming Navarro's edgy presence was. Despite this, he wasn't happy.

"I feel like I could have done this album better," he said after it was released, "but I can't change life experiences."

The record buying public of the world appeared to agree with him. Critical reaction was lukewarm; sales, compared to 'BloodSugarSexMagik', were sluggish.

RECALLING THE physical and mental damage caused by their last tour, the band were determined to ensure that their campaign would be as smooth and problem-free as possible. Flea had insisted that they spend no more than three weeks on the road at a time, as he wanted to spend more time with his young daughter. As a result, 1995 and 1996 saw them play fewer shows than they had ever done in support of an album.

But Navarro was increasingly unhappy with his status as a Red Hot Chili Pepper. The band hit the UK in July 1996 amid rumours that they were about to split. Kiedis, Flea and Smith denied that was the case; Navarro, on the other hand, was brutally candid about the situation.



"THERE WAS A DAY WHEN I JUST THOUGHT, 'FK IT, I QUIT' AND WALKED OUT OF THE STUDIO." - FLEA**

"There are days I wish I wasn't in this band," he told Kerrang! backstage at Wembley Arena, "and then other days I'm thrilled to be here. Sometimes I think it's worked out better than I expected and other times I reckon it hasn't worked out at all. There's always some area of what we're doing – creatively, commercially, artistically – that I hate. At times, it's just the money that keeps me going."

The money did indeed keep Navarro going through the rest of 1996 and into 1997, when the band opted to take some time off. That year, they played just one show, appearing at the typhoon-ravaged Fuji Rock Festival in Yamanashi, Japan, on July 26.

In the downtime, Navarro and Chad Smith began work on a project the guitarist called Suede. More high profile was the Jane's Addiction reunion – or, in Perry Farrell's words, "relapse" – which saw them joined by Flea on bass.

"Relapse" was an unfortunate choice of word around Navarro. Like Kiedis a few years before, he had fallen off the wagon and was using drugs again. He decided to lay low while he battled his demons again.

Navarro was quiet until March 1998, when he appeared in the new issue of 'Guitar' magazine, ostensibly to talk

Making a splash: (above) the band catch sight of Chad's minibrill

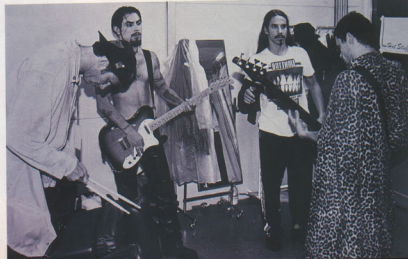
[THE NAVARRO YEARS]



Above: Navarro flaunts the "no heavy petting" rule

Right: a typically heterosexual jam session, July 1996

Bottom right: Dave's moustache chic permeates the band, July 1997



"AS SAD AS THIS EXPERIENCE WAS FOR ME, I FOUND IT TO BE EQUALLY EXCITING." - DAVE NAVARRO

about his new solo project, Spread. After confessing to being "burnt out by the whole rock'n'roll touring machine concept" following the Jane's dates, talk turned to the Chili Peppers. The guitarist revealed that an album's worth of material had been written — including one song, 'Circle Of The Noose', which featured the voice of revered Pakistani religious singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan — although he wasn't sure when it was due to be finished.

Questioned how this album would differ from 'One Hot Minute', his reply was sharp, stinging and even harsher than his last proclamation: "This material might actually be good."

His characteristic pessimism surfaced one question later, when he was asked whether the Chili Peppers had a bright future ahead.

"To be perfectly honest, I just don't know," came the answer. "I don't want to say we have a bright future, because with our luck that would be like shooting myself in the foot."

NAVARRO'S CAUTION

was justified. On April 3, 1998, the band released an official statement announcing that the guitarist had left to concentrate on Spread.

"This is a completely mutual parting based on creative differences. We had fun, and I love the guy," said Anthony Kiedis in the statement.

Navarro's own take on the split was no less diplomatic. "The only way I can describe this amicable parting of ways is as follows: When I was 17 the time had come for me to leave the comfort and safety of the nest... thus turning to a new chapter in my life. As sad as this experience was for me, I found it to be equally as exciting. I knew then that in my absence

the love my father had for me would be no different than my love for him. The only difference that I can see in this case is that my father would never have suggested the light bulb costumes. On a serious note, I will miss the band very much. I know in my heart that the friendships we've established will remain forever eternal."

Whispers from sources close to the band suggested that the split wasn't as amicable as both parties had claimed. Navarro was reportedly furious that Kiedis had allegedly dispatched Flea to inform the guitarist that his services were no longer required. Although neither party has ever spoken about what truly happened, a passage from an early manuscript of Navarro's as-yet unpublished book, 'Don't Try This At Home', sheds some light on the mood of their parting.

"I got a call from Flea: 'Dave, in order to continue to make music and work in a productive way, we feel it would be better to do it with another guitar player'. Initially, my reaction was pretty much understanding because I was leaning in that direction anyway. At that point I was relatively okay with it. I asked Flea,

'Why? What happened?'

"Well, we all had a meeting'. Those were the first words that came out of his mouth. I was floored. I had been a part of probably 12

bands and management meetings where we would discuss other members' problems and how we could help. And every time that other member was included. This was a meeting from which I was excluded. If I had been at that meeting, I would have said the same thing. 'You're right, I have my own thing. Let's be friends'.

"But under these circumstances, I felt upset and humiliated. And when I asked what their reason was, Flea told me, 'Well, Anthony's had a problem with you for two years'. I asked Flea what Anthony's problem was. He went, 'Oh, come on. You know. The problem you guys have been having for years'.

"And I said, 'No, I really don't know. I've never had a problem with Anthony'. I finally talked to Anthony, and when I asked him, 'Why?', and what his problem was, he had no answer. The closest thing he had to an answer that I finally squeezed out of him was, 'Well, it's just an intangible thing that I cannot put into words. It's a chemistry that isn't working'."

Dave Navarro was once again a free agent. A month after he left, the Chili Peppers announced that they were reuniting with John Frusciante, the man whom Navarro himself replaced. One of the murkier chapters in the history of the Red Hot Chili Peppers was, mercifully, closed. The future could only get brighter. ●

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THE DARK STUFF

Another new guitarist, another set of problems. With depressing songs, tortuous recording sessions and 'faggy' videos, was this the end of the good time boys?

ONE HOT MINUTE

1995, Warner Bros



TO ROUND off their stay at Rick Rubin's Laurel Canyon home for the recording of 'BloodSugarSexMagik', the Chili Peppers carried their acoustic guitars into the surrounding gardens to perform a breezy version of 'They're Red Hot', a track written by blues guitarist Robert Johnson. In doing so, the band joined a list of illustrious rockers – among them The Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin – who'd paid tribute to Johnson's pioneering blues. The Chilis would have been aware, too, that Johnson's name had endured long after his death in 1938 because of more than just his work; famously, some said that Johnson had sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for fame. Success duly arrived, but at a price – the bluesman, according to legend, living in terror of the "hellhounds on his trail" until his death. The story has been cited time and again over the years, not least when the Stones and Zeppelin both suffered tragedies (among them, the deaths of Brian Jones and John Bonham respectively) in the wake of their own global successes. Fame, the superstitious believed, always came with a heavy cost.

You might forgive the Chilis for a belief in this superstition. 'BloodSugarSexMagik' was a bigger commercial success than anyone could have hoped, but the fallout was severe, most significantly for troubled guitarist John Frusciante who bailed out of the band midway through their 1992 tour of Japan. Even as their star continued to rise – the band truly cracked the mainstream only after Frusciante's exit thanks to the success of the album's third single 'Under The Bridge' – their problems increased, with neither of the first two replacement guitarists (Arík Marshall and Jesse Tobias) fitting into the Chilis' mind-set.

Flea suffered a mental breakdown late in 1993, this after he'd seen his close friend, Hollywood actor River Phoenix, die on the sidewalk outside LA's Viper Room club in October. Anthony Kiedis had his own problems, having failed to achieve closure in his well-documented on-off relationship with

hard drugs. New-found 'celebrity' didn't sit well with him either: where once he sang of the virtues of the City Of Angels, now he was telling interviewers that his adopted hometown was "a stifling land of smog, violence and hate". The message coming out of the camp at the time seemed to clear: be careful what you wish for.

Into this turmoil, then, stepped ex-Jane's Addiction guitarist Dave Navarro – a man well steeped in a culture of dysfunctional musicians and substance abuse. For many, the soulful, troubled guitarist was the obvious choice to succeed Frusciante. Navarro himself seemed less

sure. Jane's had ended messily, he was in the middle of a painful divorce, and he'd yet to fully ditch 'junk' either. Joining the Chilis was never going to be a cakewalk. Not least because Navarro had never really listened to – much less felt – 'The Funk'.

IT SHOULD have been a surprise to no one that 'One Hot Minute' took so long to come together, and a re-make of 'BloodSugarSexMagik' was never on the cards. To record it, the new-look band opted not to return to Rubin's Hollywood Hills mansion, instead de-camping with the producer to Hawaii for three months to

And so to bed: the Chilis in 1995 – with Dave Navarro in the line-up (far right) – dream up a change in direction



piece together their disparate ideas. Out went sex raps, feel-good funk and linear songwriting; in came lyrical introspection, dark psychedelia and layered song arrangements. The days of one-take 'vibe' recording were over. Instead, the musicians laboured painstakingly to fill every track on Rubín's soundboard with additional colour and tone. For a worryingly long period, Kiedis had trouble finding his muse: when the words did begin to flow, they were tinged with melancholia and a profound

Kurt Cobain had committed suicide and Kiedis took the news harder than most.

sense of loss. Nirvana's troubled frontman Kurt Cobain had committed suicide during the album's gestation period, and Kiedis took the news harder than most.

Cobain was a songwriter Kiedis admired, respected and liked, a fellow artist trying to break free from a crippling addiction to heroin while struggling to make sense of the dizzying, disorientating world of celebrity: now he was just another rock'n'roll casualty. 'Imagine me taught by tragedy' Kiedis sang on 'My Friends', a song introduced by the lyric, 'My friends are so depressed'. The two lines would serve as a motif for the whole album.

If 'One Hot Minute' made perfect sense to the band at the time, it made significantly less sense to the record buying public. Where were the party tunes, the horndog struts, the pretty harmonies? It would be unfair to say that the album stifled, but – accompanied by promo videos their own record company dismissed as 'faggy' and 'pretentious' – the singles 'Warped', 'My Friends' and 'Aeroplane' failed to connect as their predecessors from 'BSSM' had, and the album never looked likely to trouble 'Billboard' chart compilers to the same extent. With the Peppers' 2003 'Greatest Hits' album including only one track from the album, there is a tendency now to look upon 'One Hot Minute' as a beautiful mistake, a noble but ultimately doomed experiment. Such a view does the album a disservice. The Chiliis weren't playing for the crowd here, they were battling to save the soul of the band, battling indeed for their own souls. They would sound bigger and better when Frusciante returned to the fold, but without the catharsis afforded by this collection, there simply wouldn't have been a Chili Peppers for him to return to.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Warped'

A rollicking opener, driven by Flea, but the dark tone of the album is set with layered guitars and multi-tracked vocals, Kiedis singing, 'My tendency for dependency is offending me, it's upending me'.

2 'Aeroplane'

With a chorus borne aloft by children's voices this track has a joyous, uplifting feel. But the lyric suggests turmoil bubbling beneath.

3 'Deep Kick'

Splashed with psychedelic colour, this is Kiedis' affectionate look at the band's musical journey from Fairfax High and the streets of LA to international stardom.

4 'My Friends'

Essentially a re-write of 'Under The Bridge', once again celebrating

brotherhood and love in the face of adversity. Thankfully, All Saints will never f**k this one up.

5 'Coffee Shop'

A clunky, heavy rocker, with ill-fitting funky interludes, and a chorus which namechecks the Godfather of Punk, Iggy Pop.

6 'Pea'

Rather pointless acoustic solo turn from Flea partly inspired by a beating that he took from rednecks who took exception to his pink Mohawk.

7 'One Big Mob'

With Navarro-inspired arty meanderings, this lengthy track features Navarro's baby brother James Gabriel crying like a... er, baby.

8 'Walkabout'

Characterless funk ballad Dave Navarro said he'd happily skip.

9 'Tearjerker'

Ballad best read as Kiedis' tribute to the then recently departed Kurt Cobain. Weeping strings lend the song a Beatles-esque feel.

10 'One Hot Minute'

Dark-hued track with Kiedis calling out, 'Am I all alone?' in the chorus as Navarro piles on the guitar FX.

11 'Falling Into Grace'

Mid-paced track with Navarro playing through a talkbox and chanting by the band's yoga instructor.

12 'Shallow Be Thy Game'

Heavy and powerful rhythmic funk – and the closest this album gets to Navarro's Jane's Addiction work.

13 'Transcending'

A thoughtful, elegiac tribute to Flea's friend River Phoenix.

DAVE NAVARRO

GUITARIST 1993-1998

IF THE Devil played guitar, he would probably look pretty similar to 'Laughing' Dave Navarro. Permanently followed by a black cloud, Navarro shrugged aside drug addiction and personal traumas to invent 'alternative rock' with Jane's Addiction in the 1980s, before jumping aboard the good ship Chili Pepper at the second time of asking in 1993. That really cheered him up...

CHILDHOOD "My parents didn't listen to me as a kid. Here I am, an only child, and I'm sitting in my room trying desperately to have someone understand what I'm saying. And they're just not getting it. So I turned to other avenues, and I turned to guitar."

"I'm just as fking superficial as the next guy. At times, it's just the money that keeps me going."**

GROWING UP "I've never filled out a job application, never stood in line for an interview or struggled to write a resumé. I never worked in a video store rewinding tapes or in a 7-eleven pouring Sturpees. I admire Eddie Vedder's work ethic, but I'm not sorry I didn't pump gas. My first paying job was playing guitar at the Troubadour in Los Angeles when I was 15 and my friend Steven Perkins and I were in a speed-metal band called Dizastre. We got paid 30 bucks, then went out and drank more than we should have. I knew I'd found my career, and I've never considered another."

SUCCESS "I know it's not cool to talk about money; we're supposed to be tortured artists,

but I'm just as f**king superficial as the next guy. At times it's just the money that keeps me going."

DRUGS "I saw my reflection in the oven one day when I was sitting on the kitchen floor, shooting up, trying to fix, trying to hit a vein and I was vomiting all over myself and it was just the most appalling thing. I never could have pictured myself in any kind of state like that. It progressed from smoking pot when I was 11 years old, to ending up in a trailer park in Reseda for a year, shooting heroin and coke every day."

WOMEN "I have been in a number of relationships that have hurt me very badly. When I tell

myself, 'All women are whores', what I'm saying is, I try to prepare myself for the worst type of pain. I will expect a girl to turn around and have sex with my friends."

MEM "I don't relate to men very well. I tend to see men as aggressive pigs because of what I've experienced as a kid."

FAME "Now that I'm in this famous band, I sometimes get

treated better than I ordinarily would. I can walk into the Hard Rock Casino in Vegas and ask for the chips with the name of my band on them. I don't, but I could."

LOS ANGELES "Los Angeles is my favourite city in the world. I would never live anywhere else."

IMAGE "Some days I'm more concerned with how my hair looks than what my guitar sounds like."

DAVE FACTS!

● Born June 7, 1967 in Santa Monica, California

● Navarro began playing guitar at the age of 12, after his father James bought him an acoustic six-string. He joined his first band, South Dakota Railroad, in junior high school.

● At the age of 15, Dave Navarro saw his mother Constance and aunt murdered by his mother's ex-boyfriend. It took US police eight years to capture the killer.

● As a child, Navarro once attempted to remove his own taste buds. "I was a f**ked-up kid," he explained. "Who knows what I was thinking."

● Navarro joined Jane's Addiction in March 1986. After three hugely influential albums – 1987's 'Jane's Addiction', 1988's 'Nothing's Shocking' and 1990's 'Ritual De Lo Habitual' – and much drug use, the band split in September 1991.

● After Jane's Addiction split up, Navarro was asked to join Guns N'Roses by Axl Rose. He declined, but in 1999 he played on 'Oh My God', a new Guns N'Roses track which appeared on the soundtrack of the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie 'End Of Days'.

● Navarro used to have a coffin in the living room of his LA home. He called it "a sarcastic coffee table".

● Navarro was first invited to join the Chili Peppers for the Lollapalooza tour in summer 1992.

He turned down the offer at that point, but joined the band just over a year later. At the time he didn't own a single Chili Peppers album.

● Navarro's first gig with the Chili Peppers was in front of an audience of 250,000 people at the Woodstock II festival, on August 14, 1994.

● In 2001, Navarro co-wrote a book called 'Don't Try This At Home' with Mötley Crüe/Marilyn Manson biographer Neil Strauss. Chapters of the book contradicted the official line that Navarro's exit from the Chili Peppers was by mutual agreement.

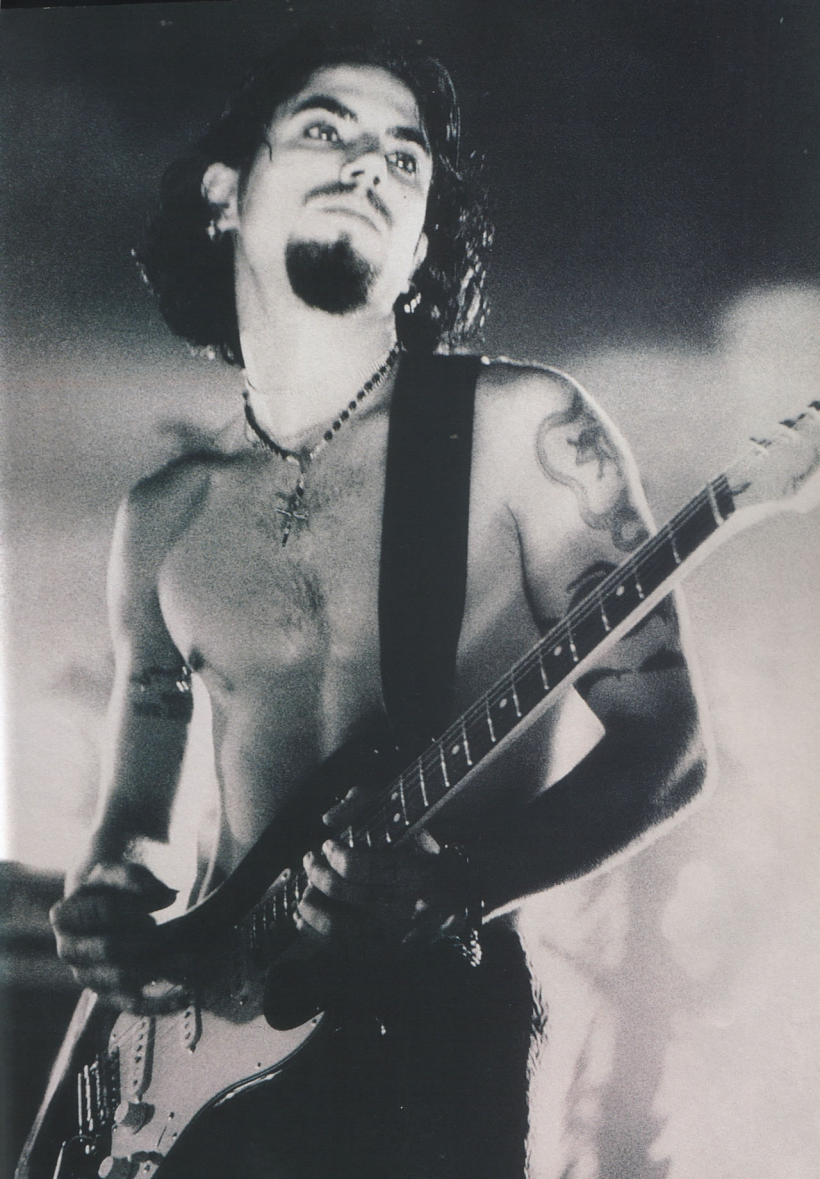
● These days, in addition to the re-formed Jane's Addiction, Navarro also plays in the all-star Hollywood 'jam' band Camp Freddy, featuring ex-Cult bassist Billy Morrison and ex-Guns N'Roses drummer Matt Sorum.

● Navarro married his first wife, Tanja, in a pagan ceremony in 1990 and his second wife, Rhian, in a civil ceremony in 1994. That marriage lasted less than a year.

● Navarro's spring 2003 wedding to Carmen Electra was filmed by MTV as part of their reality TV series 'Till Death Do Us Part: Carmen And Dave'. The show first airs in the US in January.

● Navarro once posted a video clip of himself masturbating on his website. Asked why, he said: "Once you've seen a picture of a person masturbating how much deeper can you go?" Wise words.





[THE COMEBACK]

BAND

OF

BROTHERS

IN WHICH THE CHILIS DECIDE

NOT TO SELF-DESTRUCT

AND BECOME THE WORLD'S BIGGEST

ROCK BAND INSTEAD.

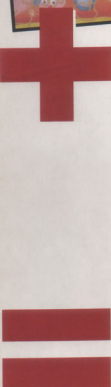
Rock this way: roadies
guide the Chilis to the
stage, Toronto 1999



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[THE COMEBACK]

IN THE routinely horrible record business, heroin is not considered a problem drug because it doesn't tend to harm creativity. Cocaine is the one to watch for, because once a band can afford to start stuffing as much Womble dust up their noses as Scarface, they will record *anything* and insist that it sounds great. Nirvana, Guns N' Roses, Aerosmith, Thin Lizzy and Led Zeppelin all made fantastic albums when one or more of the guys were shooting up smack like fiends. As The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards once famously said, "When I was on heroin I learned to ski..."

Che Guevara. Anthony Kiedis flew to India, swam in the Ganges and visited the Dalai Lama. The movements of Chad Smith are less clear, though they probably involved sporting events and beer. In April 1998, Dave Navarro left for reasons that have never been made entirely clear, though his notorious drug use was, apparently, not a factor. "I can't imagine it would be," he later said in a 1999 interview with 'Spin' magazine. "I have, and I always will have, a tremendous respect for all of them. And I'll also say that my favourite member is John Frusciante."

"I love Dave and I miss him," said Kiedis in the same article. "I hope we had fun and go on to be friends at a later time."

"Personality-wise, they are really at odds," added long-time producer Rick Rubin of the fractious relationship between frontman and guitarist. "Dave is dark-humoured, dark-souled, and Anthony doesn't appreciate that. But once Dave kind of left us and Anthony was dealing with his own insurmountable problems, [the other members] thought the band would not continue, that there was too much anti-momentum."

It had been rumoured that Anthony's travels formed part of some kind of rehab process — after all, when Hillel Slovak ▶

"I HAVE SPENT SO MANY OF MY YEARS UNDER THE INFLUENCE... I DON'T TAKE ANY OF MY CLEAN TIME FOR GRANTED." — KIEDIS

and I made 'Exile On Main Street.'"

The Red Hot Chili Peppers have had a long association with heroin. Anthony Kiedis, John Frusciante and Dave Navarro have all been serious spikers and, of course, the drug cost original guitarist Hillel Slovak his life — one of the more obvious downsides of being an addict. The other seriously negative aspect to heroin addiction is that once bands clean up... their music really, really sucks.

Remarkably, as 1999's 'Californication' — and, three years later, 'By The Way' — would show, the Chills would record their best material entirely clean. But in 1997, it didn't look like there was going to be any material at all as there was no band to record it.

1995's 'One Hot Minute' had been a massive critical and commercial disappointment after the multi-platinum party manifesto of 'BloodSugarSexMagik' four years previously. The band's subsequent despondency really became apparent in 1997 when an appearance at the Tibetan Freedom Festival was pulled due to lack of rehearsal. Two planned summer dates in Hawaii and Alaska were pushed back — first when Kiedis came off his Harley, then again when Chad Smith broke his wrist in another motorcycle crash — and then cancelled altogether because the band were not sufficiently rehearsed. The one show they *did* play — Japan's Mount Fuji Festival — was cut short by a freak downpour.

The painkillers that Kiedis had been prescribed following his accident had whetted old appetites for something a little stronger, and he was back on heroin. "I have spent so many of my years under the influence of drug addiction that it's probably genetically coded in every cell in my body," he said after eventually wrestling this particular monkey from his back yet again. "I know that it stopped adding anything positive to my experience years ago. And I know that I don't take any of my clean time for granted."

AS THE indestructible band started to look all too fragile, the Chili Peppers dispersed to clear their heads and contemplate their collective future. Flea journeyed to Costa Rica, lay in a hammock and read a biography of the Central American leftist revolutionary



Kiedis and Flea prepare for a grim game of Spin The Bottle

Photo: Tony Woodliff

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Friends re-united: the Chiliis bounce back with Kiedis favouring the 'metal schoolboy' look



THE WORST THING ABOUT DRUGS IS THAT PEOPLE GET CONSUMED BY THEM - NOTHING ELSE MATTERS." - SMITH

died Kiedis had retreated to a remote Mexican village to go cold turkey – but this proved to be untrue. Whatever the singer needed, he realised it wasn't in India. "What I was looking for was in my own back yard," he said after returning to LA and kicking heroin one last time. "It was my friends."

ONE FRIEND in particular was ready to rejoin the brotherhood. John Frusciante and Kiedis had grown apart during the snow-balling success of 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik'. Frusciante felt he was selling out, while the singer saw the band leapfrogging several tiers of stardom as nothing but a positive experience. "Getting through to the masses was something we had been aiming for, and now it was here why not embrace it?" Kiedis reasoned. "I mean, we've always had a bona fide fondness for making money. What was going on with John was like someone had cut my left nut out of my ball sack."

The Kiedis scrotum was, eventually, to be healed. Flea, who had been the only Chili

Pepper to stay in contact with their former bandmate during his narcotic maelstrom ("I was terrified. I thought for sure he was going to die"), visited Frusciante at his home in '98 and considered the guitarist fit to rejoin the band. After six years twisted out of his gourd nearly to the point of death, Frusciante had finally made the decision to enter rehab after absent-mindedly giving a taxi driver \$2,000 from a Chili Peppers' royalty cheque. Though still suffering the effects of his all-consuming chemical regime – most obviously a variety of straggly beards to hide the bruising caused by extensive dental work to repair his ruined teeth, but also the abscesses on his arms from shooting cocaine – Frusciante agreed that, physically and mentally, he was ready again.

With expectations not exactly running high, the band convened in Flea's garage in the summer of '98. "I'd hardly played guitar for five years, so I had very little ability," remembers Frusciante. "But it didn't matter to them, it was just the spirit of what I was doing

and the fact that it was me. It felt so good to have friends who really believed in me when nobody else did."

Making up for his rusty playing with boundless enthusiasm, the guitarist was – ironically enough – a massive shot in the arm for the disheartened Chili Peppers. Kiedis remembers this first meeting as the high point of the entire 'Californication' experience. "When John gets excited it's like eight billion volts of electricity. When he hit that first chord it was so perfect."

Rick Rubin agreed: "John being back makes a huge difference. He's brimming with ideas, and he lives and breathes music more than anyone I've ever seen in my life."

UNDER RUBIN'S supervision, the band began recording at Hollywood's Ocean Way Studios. Flea was going through a break-up with his girlfriend of five years, but apart from the perturbed bassist suffering the occasional panic attack, the sessions progressed smoothly. Three weeks later, 'Californication' was complete. "When we're able to just bang the songs out and we're only concerned with trying to get good performances, it's very easy. And when it goes easy, it's fun and everybody is in a good mood," says Chad Smith. "The worst thing about drugs is that people get consumed by them and nothing else matters. Things get done, but it takes a really long time."

"We recorded the tracks for 'One Hot Minute' in '94, and Anthony didn't get around to singing on them until a year later, and that's really frustrating. If we sucked and were playing bad music or we were just cranking it out because somebody gave us money to make an album, that would be a different story. But I think we're a great band, and I don't want to give up on it."

"The fact that we didn't die," explains Kiedis, "or become spiritually crippled in the process of going through all these hardships, means there really was something in the air that wanted this to happen."

When the band emerged to promote the record, the first obvious change was cosmetic. Kiedis had cut his flowing brown hair to collar length and bleached it blond. It was a decision, he would later admit to 'Rolling Stone' magazine, that spoke volumes about his state of mind. "I didn't think that at the time, but I was definitely going through a change. I had decided to be clean. It was a whole new era for myself and the band." It certainly was. Propelled by a stream of hit singles, 'Californication' would sell over 12 million copies worldwide. Kiedis, for one, saw no problem reconciling the band's rediscovered fortune with the uncompromising attitude they had developed as funk oiks on the streets of Hollywood. "All of our motivation is true and real. We could go about in limos and private jets all day long and we'd still be more punk rock than bands that call themselves punk rock today."

Typically, Flea saw things in simpler terms. "Everything is possible and that's a great feeling. The old magic is back." ●

RETURN OF THE KINGS

Goodbye amateurish funk. So long Dave Navarro. See you later songs about nobbing. And au revoir 'humping your face' bass. Result? Well, hello there superstardom!

CALIFORNICATION
1999, WEA/Warner Bros

KKKK

THE FACT that the Red Hot Chili Peppers not only fell but rose once again – six million copies of this, their seventh album, were sold in the United States alone – is astonishing.

Given that the band are now the stuff of stadium concerts and MTV weekend specials, that they feature in broadsheets and Sunday supplements, and can command slots on the playlists of both Radio 1

and Radio 2, it is difficult to stress just how much of a last hurrah 'Californication' – even the title was a lame pun – seemed destined to be. After all, music audiences may live for music but the music industry lives for numbers alone. And in this case, the numbers weren't promising to be so red hot.

The band's preceding record, 'One Hot Minute', was not, by RHCP standards, a commercial success – one million US sales was just a 10th of what this group had achieved at the start of the decade as the sales of 'BloodSugarSexMagik' reached a peak. A slow slide into a more

selective appeal is the usual career path for any huge rock band, and fans were no doubt relishing the possible prospect of a club tour where the band could really 'connect' with their public. They were to be disappointed.

SO WHAT went so spectacularly right? Firstly, John Frusciante rejoined the band, replacing maverick guitarist Dave Navarro, who lasted for just the 'One Hot Minute' album and tour. Frusciante was coming back from a monstrous drug bender which he was fortunate to survive. He looked awful – a straggly beard hiding the bruising from dental work to replace his rotting teeth. He also appeared to be something of a liability. At best, he was a thorn in the side of photographers hoping to shoot four pieces of Cali beefcake, at worst, a relapse waiting to happen. Staggeringly, Frusciante proved to be the Chili Peppers' trump card.

His deceptively simple guitar playing and fragile harmonies sounded wonderful, he stayed clean and soon felt comfortable enough to play shirtless, albeit with arms ravaged by abscesses from apathetic shooting up. Last year, speaking of his personal problems, Frusciante employed a tone of almost karmic fatalism, as if this were a journey he was destined to make. But, still, with unsympathetic dealers looking for money – Frusciante owed tens of thousand of dollars – this may well have been a journey on a one-way ticket. Were it not for his return to the band – and their subsequent return to superstardom – then... well, who knows? Fortunately this reunion would save all concerned from either obscurity or a fatal beating from some disgruntled smack-peddler.

The second – and more important – change on 'Californication' was that the Red Hot Chili Peppers learned how to write songs. Their past records had been consistent only in their inconsistency. Colourful, charismatic and distinctive they may have been, but for every 'Under The Bridge' there was always a 'Sir Psycho Sexy' lurking in a state of unappealing arousal just around the corner. Their albums were crammed with good ideas and boiling with creative intention, but they



Leg it! Chilis do a runner after Flea nicks a hotel shower cap

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

CALIFORNICATION

...just weren't *really* good throughout.
 On 'Californication', things changed, or, at the very least, they began to change a process that would be continued on the group's subsequent album, 2002's 'By Your Side'. It was here that the Chili Peppers

The Chilis started to trust their ability to write songs rather than just to play music.

...grew into themselves, and started to trust their ability to write *songs* rather than just to *play* music. Also notable is the severely toned-down 'bass humping your face' funk, allowing Flea to showcase just how good a bass player he actually is.

The results, often, are spectacular. 'Californication', the song itself, is sublime, four minutes that epitomised everything the band had learned to do; the swinging rhythm, the instrumentation, the pace and control of the writing, the quiet sunshine menace of the lyric, 'A teenage bride with a baby inside getting high on information'. There are other fine songs, too: the crashing arrival of opener 'Around The World', with all its tricks of groove and melody; the gliding rock'n'roll of 'Easily', and an unfolding, expanding chorus; a gorgeous, reflective closing composition in the form of 'Road Trippin'', a celebration of friendship of some confidence and character.

All of this was enough to bring the Red Hot Chili Peppers back to life, or perhaps that should be *über-life*, a world of flash-bulbs and celebrity friends far removed from the punk rock scuzz that first gave this band form.

Of course, they played a blinder upon its release, with expensive, moody videos (such vignettes as the band invading a classroom as naughty priests on sex safari for 1988's 'Catholic School Girls Rule' were a thing of the past), tours that stretched into the horizon of next year's calendar, and appearances in *all* the right places. But make no mistake, it was the music they created on 'Californication' that facilitated such a remarkable resurrection.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers – who were supposed to be, or soon to be, dead – leapt back into the spotlight of centre stage as the epitome of sexuality, creativity and abandon. And they did this from the platform of an album that few would have predicted they could have made.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Around The World'

Ominous guitars and Kiedis bellowing give way to something more upbeat, with a fantastic chorus.

2 'Parallel Universe'

Surging metronomic rocker with Anthony proclaiming himself a 'California King'.

3 'Scar Tissue'

A remorseful ballad cut from familiar cloth, but it fits them well. The first single with a video of the band looking the worse for wear – a literal realisation of the lyrics.

4 'Otherside'

Another hit, another baleful soft/loud semi-ballad expertly delivered.

5 'Get On Top'

Rather disposable, quite possibly sexual, potboiler. Tasty wah-wah work from Frusciante, mind.

6 'Californication'

A paean to the darker side of the band's adopted home state. The album's finest moment by far.

7 'Easily'

A combination of songwriting mastery and sonic muscle that keeps getting higher and higher.

8 'Porcelain'

Easing the foot off the gas a little too much, this delicate effort is perhaps a ballad too far.

9 'Emit Remmus'

Kiedis recalls a love affair conducted in London during... see if you can decipher the backwards title.

10 'I Like Dirt'

Quirky, jerky number to appease really old-school fans. Presumably not 'dirt' as Alice in Chains would have understood it – ie, smack.

11 'This Velvet Glove'

'It's such a waste to be wasted in the first place', says Kiedis. More mid-tempo remorse.

12 'Savior'

Less a bruised rumination on the human fallibility, more a showcase for Frusciante's sublime guitar.

13 'Purple Stain'

Bawdy statement about making love with a lady during menstruation. At least they get it all out of their system in one go.

14 'Right On Time'

Shouty knockabout offering. The closest thing to filler here.

15 'Road Trippin''

Whimsical, gorgeous song about a surf trip to end 56 red-hot minutes. No drums, no bass, just an acoustic guitar, a voice and a melody.

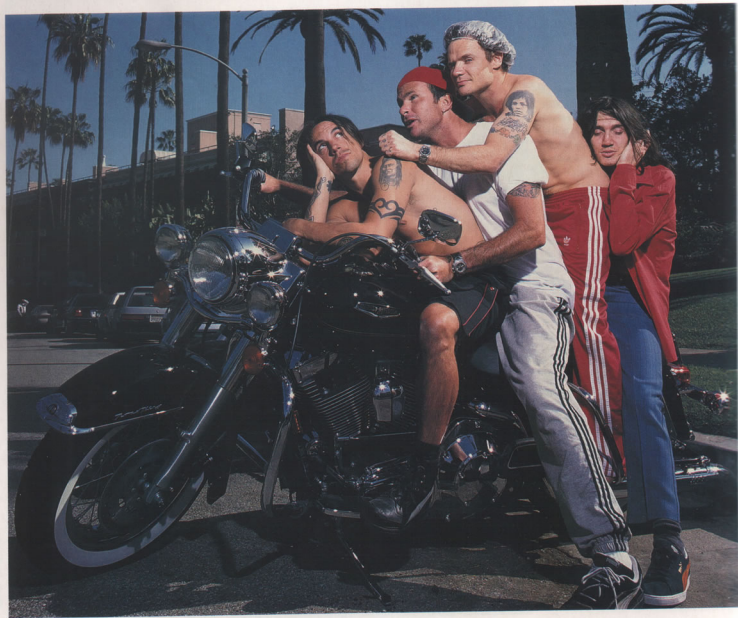
[THE PICTURES]

GET ON TOP 1996-2003

Newly clean and sober, with John Frusciante back in the ranks and 'Californication' flying off the racks, the stage was set for the Chilis to reach the biggest audiences of their career...

▼ **KIEDIS, SMITH, FLEA
AND FRUSCIANTE**
By Ross Halfin
Beverly Hills Hotel, 2001

► **FULL FLIGHT**
By Tony Wooliscroft
Melbourne,
February 2000





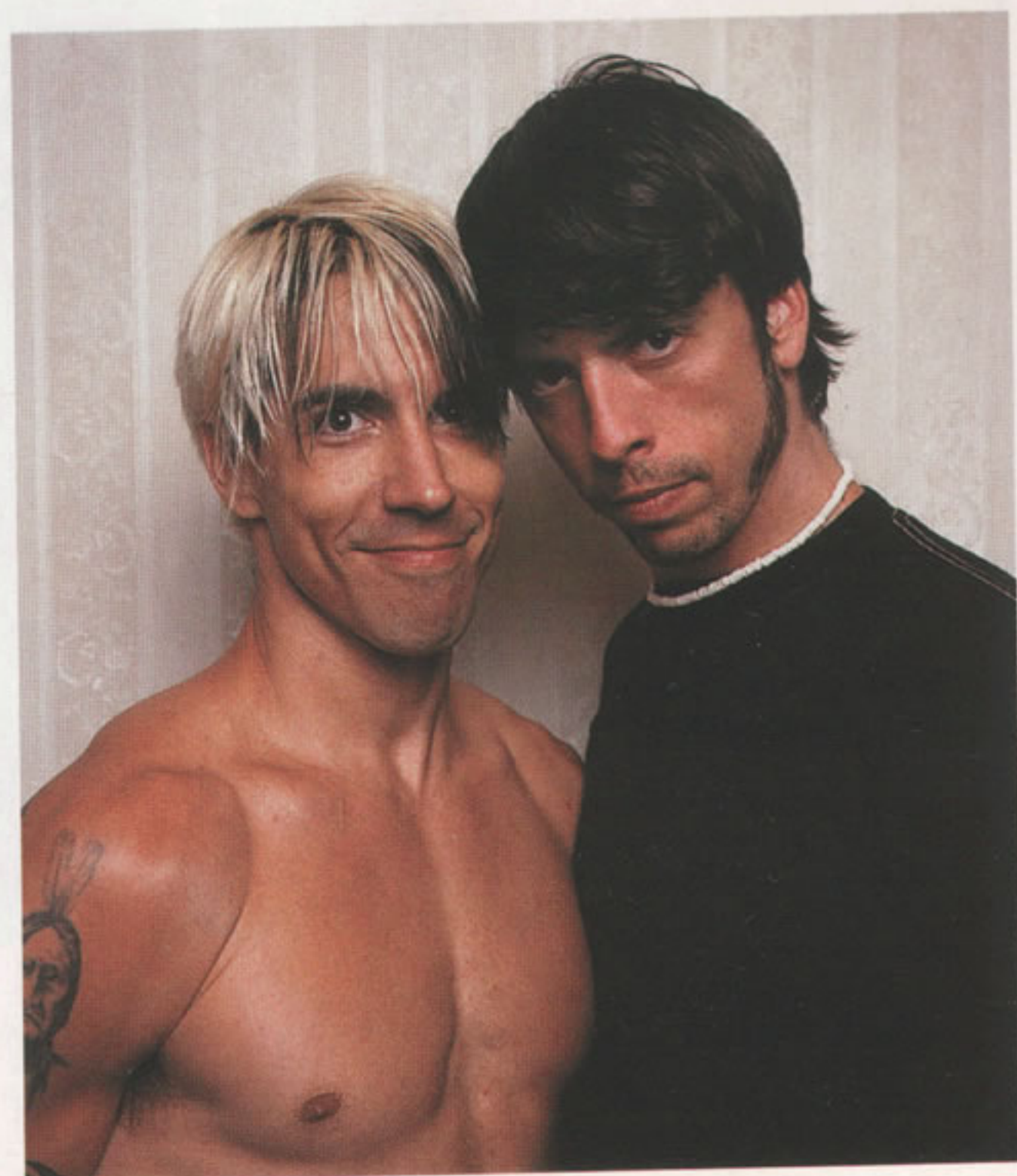


◀ TIBETAN FREEDOM
CONCERT
By Tony Woolliscroft
RFK Stadium,
Washington DC, 1998





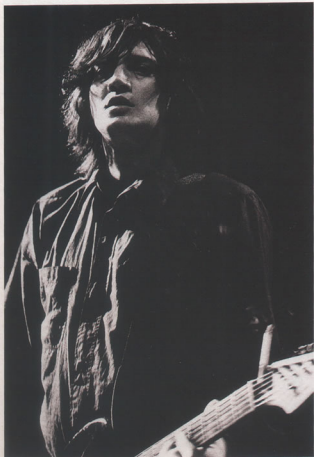
▲ ANTHONY KIEDIS
By Tony Woolliscroft
In flight, 1999



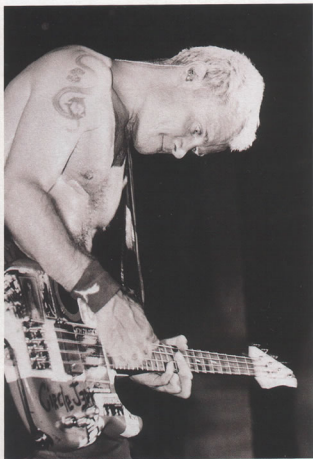
► **NURSE BETTY PREMIERE**
By Joy Scheller
New York, September 2000

► **COUNTRY GENTLEMEN**
By Chris Cuffaro
Los Angeles, May 1999

► **KIEDIS AND DAVE GROHL**
By Tony Woolliscroft
Melbourne, February 2000

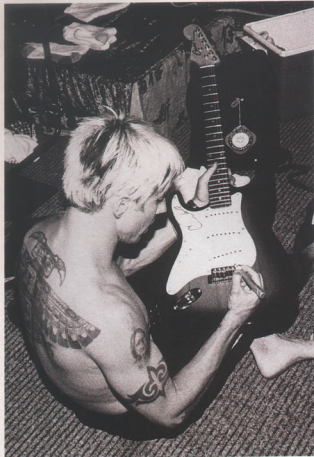


▲ **JOHN FRUSCIANTE**
By Tony Woolliscroft
9.30 Club,
Washington DC,
June 1998

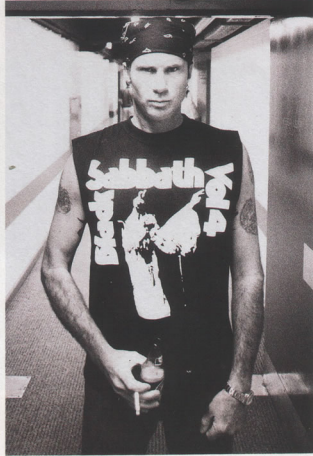


◀ **FLEA**
By Tony Woolliscroft
Carnegie,
October 2002

◀ **CHAD SMITH**
By Tony Woolliscroft
Melbourne,
February 2000



▲ **ANTHONY KIEDIS**
By Tony Woolliscroft
Melbourne,
February 2000





Photos: L.F.I. Retina

▲ CHILI PEPPERS LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND
By Clay Patrick McBride
2002

ADULT MATERIAL

They fumbled through the '80s, made it and lost it in the '90s, but now the Chili Peppers had the opportunity to become one of the world's truly great rock bands...

BY THE WAY

2002, WEA/Warner Bros

KKKK

THIS SHOULD never have worked. A band best known for its slavish devotion to funk ditching the very thing that had first propelled them to the top and venturing into the world of ska, mariachi, electronica and a lot of balladizing. A band with a combined age of 150, working with a guitarist who is undoubtedly a genius but also teetering on the edge of sanity. A career built on juvenility, sexual innuendo, bragging, toned muscle flexing and a history of rock'n'roll debauchery pushed to one side. In short, a band that should have been a lewd, largely forgotten dinosaur were moving into middle age with style and class.

The blueprint had already been unveiled on 'Californication'. The signs that the Red Hot Chili Peppers had finally grown up, moved on and were ready to reclaim their mantle as the world's biggest, and most universally liked, rock band had already been laid. More importantly, John Frusciante had returned on that album and was getting very close to being back to his best – on 'By The Way' he got there.

This is very much a Frusciante album – his guitars slither all over each song, bursting forth with invention, imbued with a musicality and maturity he could never live up to when teetering on the edge of sanity or death during his addiction to heroin. Listen to the guitar solo on 'Don't Forget Me' or the intricate picking on 'Cabron' and it's impossible not to stand back and gape. But, in case you thought he may have forgotten how to write a riff, a spiky, dance-floor pleasing funk stab, listen to the opening of 'Can't Stop'. Here Frusciante reminds you of just what it was that got the Chili Peppers where they are today and just how far they have moved on in the course of just this one album.

Importantly, 'By The Way' marked the first time the band had been entirely clean in the studio. Smith obviously still enjoyed a beer, but it wasn't hurting his drumming. Kiedis had said goodbye to heroin long ago, Frusciante was fully recovered from the drug maelstrom he found himself in

after he quit the band during the tour for 'BloodSugarSexMagik' and Flea had given up torching bales of weed. For a while he claimed he found music cold when he was not high but admitted that, on this album, the music "became transcendental again".

It led to greater examination of each song, a greater concentration on each individual chorus, verse or solo. The Chili Peppers were determined this would be done their way and that each song would be devoted maximum attention. It paid off. It's an album that, for the most part, grows with listening, shimmering with expansive and ambitious overdubs, tiny guitar lines or drum fills that make the songs. It's built on grand musical ideas, on strings, Mellotrons and Beach Boys harmonies that should have been beyond them. There are, of

course, exceptions – the album is clearly a few songs too long and the one-dimensional bass-driven jam of 'Throw Away Your Television' should never have made it to the pressing plant.

It was also the first time Kiedis discovered he could sing. On so many previous albums he would substitute melody for shouting, range for rap and feeling for image – a matter of style over substance. His vocals this time were recorded entirely differently – in a suite on the seventh floor of the Chateau Marmont Hotel on Sunset Boulevard. Whether it was being out of a recording studio, whether it was the comforts of one of LA's most notorious rock star hang-outs, there's an intensity to his singing, a closeness that suggests he could be sitting next door crooning through the

Older, wiser, richer:
the Chills in
Hollywood, 2002



wall. Lyrics were written hanging around the hotel, while the rest of the band, Frusciante particularly, listened intently to the takes, making suggestions to the notoriously laissez-faire producer, Rick Rubin. It's an album littered with catchy melodies – the title track's chorus alone has the most memorable tune the band have ever written.

It found the group willing to experiment too, to shed the funk-rock skin to which they had grown so accustomed. They knew they could have released the same album again, a re-hash of any number of songs from their back catalogue. It would have sold reasonably well, it would have generated its own hardcore of fans but it wouldn't have pushed them anywhere. To their credit they drove themselves further musically than they ever had before.

The first half of the album maintains a unity, a distinct uniformity of sound and emotion and it's no real surprise that this is from where most of the singles have been culled. The second half, though, is a riot of experimentation: from Beach Boys harmonies to the ska of 'On Mercury', from bubblegum surf-pop to Tex-Mex.

There's an intensity that suggests Kiedis could be next door crooning through the wall.

At the last count, 'By The Way' had gone platinum in 26 countries, which is astonishing given that a few years earlier, without Frusciante in tow, the band were heading nowhere fast with 'One Hot Minute'. It seems odd that with three members approaching 40, on album number eight, the Red Hot Chili Peppers finally came of age – ditching the idiocy and love-gangsterisms and made the album that nobody considered possible, the one that no one even thought they had in them.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 By The Way

An instantly memorable chorus, a brooding opening and an explosion of angular riffing.

2 Universally Speaking

Delicate, light and dripping with Beach Boys harmonies.

3 This Is The Place

An updated 'Under The Bridge'. Groovy, brooding and eloquent.

4 Dosed

Kiedis unleashes his voice for the first time in his life, built on glittering, chiming Frusciante guitar lines.

5 Don't Forget Me

A two-chord riff unfurls into stuttering, glacial drops of beauty. Kiedis' lyrics hint at a last goodbye to heroin.

6 The Zephyr Song

The Chili's first nod to electronica.

Not the strongest on the album by a long chalk, but a successful single.

7 Can't Stop

Old-school Chili riff, building drums, then the spkiest guitar stab that Frusciante has ever concocted. The one and only return to funk-rap.

8 I Could Die For You

A formulaic dirge of introspective brooding and uninspired guitars.

9 Midnight

Lush strings lift this otherwise ordinary slow number

10 Throw Away Your Television

A one-idea bass-driven jam.

11 Cabron

A storming mariachi romp as surprising as it is well executed. With some stunning Frusciante moments.

12 Tear

A languorous ballad with an epic harmony-led chorus. And two-guitar and one-trumpet solo. Beautiful.

13 On Mercury

The Chili's toy with ska and emerge remarkably unscathed. An experiment that should have proved disastrous but is strangely enjoyable.

14 Minor Thing

Straight-ahead rock action infused with Frusciante's soprano harmonising, a potent secret weapon.

15 Warm Tape

The album's most experimental song, a lilting rhythm and a warped keyboard before the big chorus.

16 Venice Queen

Psychedelic, dreamy and ethereal. The Chili's of old would have laughed their socks off.

ONE GOOD

gust of wind and Anthony Kiedis is dead. He won't leave a good-looking corpse either, not after a 200-foot swan-dive onto the circular concrete drive at the entranceway to the luxurious Gran Melia Hotel here in downtown Caracas. Assembled with the rest of the Red Hot Chili Peppers to be photographed on the roof in the early afternoon October sun, the frontman has decided to walk out onto a girder protruding four feet into thin air.

There's no handrail and only a flimsy steel mesh between Kiedis and lethal free fall, so Chad Smith protectively moves a little closer to the edge.

"You're making me nervous, Chad," Kiedis warns the drummer, the breeze tousling his brown hair.

"You're making me f**king nervous, Anthony!" yells Flea as guitarist John Frusciante laughs and shakes his head.

"I just want to be alone!" the singer shouts, enjoying the view for a few seconds longer before calmly taking three deliberate steps back to safety.

"We might be getting old," grins Smith, "but we're not boring."

The Chili Peppers are in South America to play 10 shows, many in

get you killed. The police – some say – only tend to go there to perform "extrajudicial executions" of undesirables.

Other suggest that if the police hesitate to take criminals out of circulation, mob lynchings get the job done just as well.

Eighty per cent of the 4.6 million population here in Caracas live below the poverty line, which is surprising when you consider that Venezuela is the world's fourth largest exporter of oil. Indeed, the oil boom of the '70s brought people flocking to the city from the countryside as the economy flourished. To use a local saying, life was easier than a low-hanging mango.

Recently, however, life has not been quite so carefree. President Hugo Chavez – reinstated in April after a violent coup – has put the brakes on oil production to protect Venezuela's natural resources in the long term. In conjunction with unstable oil prices, the socio-economic crisis has crept ever further into a very deep hole, the murder rate quintupling in the last 10 years.

Found on the northernmost tip of South America, Venezuela is a beautiful country, boasting pristine beaches, luxuriant rainforests, the 979-metre high

AROUND THE

uncharted Peppers territory such as Costa Rica, Panama and today's stop-over, Venezuela's tense capital.

Looking straight down from the roof, the swimming pool below is surrounded by stunning women – Venezuela boasts five Miss Worlds, more than any other country in the event's 50-year history – catching rays, sipping cocktails and flicking through 'Vogue'. Look a little further and you'll see the black iron hotel gate, watched over by two large men wearing jackets that fail to cover the bulge that big guns make. Look past that to the left – a direction that the staff in the lobby strongly advise against travelling – and you'll see the street where John Frusciante's guitar tech had his fake Rolex ripped from his wrist a couple of hours earlier. Beyond that, past the office blocks, clogged roads and garish billboards common to any big city, thousands upon thousands of brick twigs stretch for miles up into the surrounding hills. This is the barrio, a lawless makeshift slum that rings Caracas.

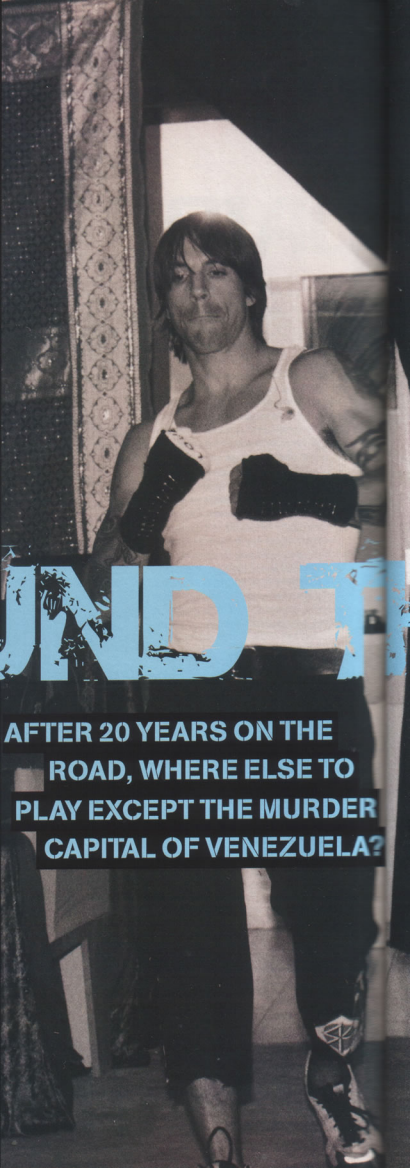
When night falls, this foreboding sprawl loses its daytime ugliness as the white lights from the crumbling dwellings twinkle like stars. A closer look will, however,

Angel Falls and the Andes. Caracas, however, is not a beautiful city – it's a desperate one.

TWENTY MINUTES after Anthony Kiedis' high-rise balancing act, Chad Smith is relaxing in the private lounge bar adjacent to the Chili Peppers' suites on the 19th floor. The drummer signs the bill for a trolley of prawn cocktails and spaghetti Bolognese as Dixie Normous – past aliases have included Willy Nailem, Haywood Jablowme, Ivan Joiderpuss, Mike Litoris and, when in Ireland, Pat McGroin.

Even at 40, the six-foot-four drummer jokes around like a huge schoolboy – in his grey and yellow DC trainers, striped T-shirt and Oakland A's baseball cap worn on backwards. He looks like one too, despite having three kids of his own.

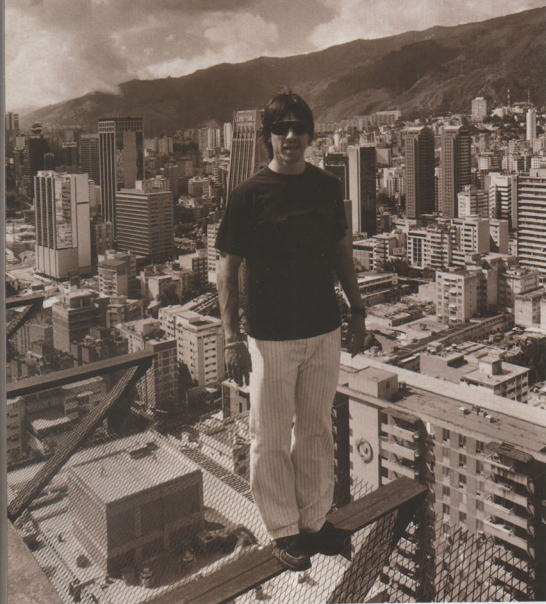
"I'm currently single... unencumbered," he says. "Personal relationships I'm not so good at, I'll stick to playing the drums. I have three very steep child support payments every month, and that's fine because I love my kids and I want that they should be well taken care of and they are... but their moms are well taken care of as well." ▶



AFTER 20 YEARS ON THE ROAD, WHERE ELSE TO PLAY EXCEPT THE MURDER CAPITAL OF VENEZUELA?

[CLASSIC
INTERVIEW
2002]

THE WORLD



The rest of the band want to wait until they have finished their duties for the day – a press conference and tonight's show – before meeting to talk. Kiedis and Flea relax, chowing down on room service in their rooms. Touring staff track down a pillow that Flea's 14-year-old daughter, Clara, knitted for him which has been left at the band's last hotel in Panama, while an assistant searches a nearby mall for hair-clipper to trim the bassist's bleached crop. Frusciante tends to spend all of his free time playing guitar and listening to his iPod or Discman – the 16 hours a day he habitually uses these portable CD players for means the tour manager carries spares for when the motors inevitably burn out. Smith has no need for "me time", however, preferring to lark about with anyone in his vicinity and chain-smoke cigarettes.

"I don't have to meditate with Flea or do yoga with John to feel connected to them," he explains. "We have two buses. I'm in the smoking meat wagon, they're on the tofu bus."

A late lunch with Smith is an entertaining hour. He is the only Chili Pepper who will admit to having a least favourite country to tour – "I'm not a big fan of Germany. They're just so f**king... German!" – and tends to be the one keen to sample local nightlife. Have the groupies changed much over the years?

"I don't really partake of the groupies too much any more."

Do they stay the same age as you get older?
"That's what I like about this business!"

Pushed on an earlier overheard conversation regarding his whereabouts the previous evening, Smith admits that he and some of the roadcrew "went to three whorehouses, sort of".
"Whorehouses?"

"Not really," he explains. "They were like strip clubs but you get to take away, like McDonald's or something. It didn't seem rough, but I was with guys with guns and shit."

At a discreet distance stands such a gentleman by the name of José. José is one of two bodyguards hired by the promoter to shadow the band. José's duties extend somewhat beyond moving on overzealous autograph hunters and fending off girls, as American rock stars are a prime target for potential kidnappers, a lucrative local cottage industry that currently thrives on ransommaking businessmen. Asked whether he's "packing", José hitches back his smartly-pressed black Levi's denim jacket to reveal a holster-stocked Glock 9mm pistol. "Ready to go!" he smiles. "Only Mexico City is worse than Caracas. On a good weekend here, maybe only 60 people get killed."

A bad weekend sees that figure double. However you feel about guns, right now it feels good that someone on your side is carrying one, ready to go.

THE RED Hot Chili Peppers congregate to be escorted by way of service elevators and kitchens to the waiting local press. José and a similarly armed associate make sure the path is clear and instruct the band to wait for them to be announced. As they walk in a corridor to go in and take questions, Smith makes the formal introductions.

"This is my friend, John," he says, as Frusciante smiles broadly. Kiedis offers his hand with a polite "Anthony", before Smith adds, "This is Flea – he plays a mean bass." All have firm handshakes except Flea, who apologetically offers chilly fingers dripping with water from holding his iced bottle of Evian.

Once announced, the band file in and sit on a stage in front of about 40 print, radio and TV journalists. Flea grabs a microphone and belches loudly while Smith helps himself from the modest buffet. Every question is asked in Spanish, translated into English, answered and then translated for the audience. In the course of the next half an hour, five questions about set-lists, drugs, and tattoos are fielded. Frusciante does most of the talking, Flea and Kiedis speak occasionally – the singer tries unsuccessfully to initiate a game of musical chairs – while Smith doesn't say a word.

"There was a strange energy in that room," Kiedis claims afterwards.

"Really? I didn't notice," says a permanently cheerful Frusciante.

The drive to Valle Des Pop – a 30,000-capacity outdoor venue set on the edge of a forest – should take just over an hour from the centre of Caracas. But the first thing you notice driving up the motorway with about five miles to go is the huge queue of vehicles ahead. Almost immediately after that, cars doing three-point turns and driving the wrong way down the road really get your attention. The jam isn't helped by an excited gig-goer getting out of his pick-up and firing his semi-automatic pistol into the air. The authorities bundle him off, but leave his truck where it is.

After three hours of slow progress under police escort – by way of a deserted, partially constructed by-pass and some fairly tense speeding against traffic – the appearance of men knocking on the windows with bootleg CDs and T-shirts for sale indicate that the end is in sight. Twenty minutes later and a naked Flea walking unashamed from the shower block to the band's dressing room is the first sight that greets you passing the familiar tool-ed-up heavy checking security passes and enter the small compound – two rows of purpose-built huts, showers and catering – that comprise the backstage area.

The smell of incense hangs in the air as Kiedis, Flea and Frusciante do their warm-up stretches and listen to Donna Summer's "I Feel Love". Smith reclines in a hammock and smokes. It's a relaxed period of preparation for all, the only apparent moment of stress comes when Frusciante, a man who has in the past abused his body with breath-taking enthusiasm and apathy, frets that the small biscuit he has just eaten might have had too much sugar in it.

Having changed into their performance clothes – much like their normal clothes except for Smith who wears a bright green sleeveless two-piece jumpsuit – the band make the short walk to the stage. The next hour-and-a-half proves exactly why the Chili Peppers are where they are today, rubbing shoulders with stadium mainstays such as U2 as one of the biggest rock bands in the world, out on their own as the best at delivering it live. A few of the tunes from 1991's

'BloodSugarSexMagik' – including a pounding run-through of 'Give It Away' and the soulful 'Under The Bridge' – are as deep into their back catalogue as they delve tonight. Otherwise the set is wholly gleaned from current album, 'By The Way', and its predecessor, 2000's 'Californication'. The Chili Peppers have reined in the funk, and in doing so found exactly what makes funk work – soul. Certainly, they could never have locked into this uncontrived, tight groove as snotty upstarts tooling around in Hollywood 20 years ago.

As Kiedis takes a short break, Flea gets behind the kit while Smith plugs in a guitar and leans back-to-back with Frusciante to jam. Kiedis watches from the side, smiling broadly as he sips his herbal tea. Besides writing their best songs to date, the Red Hot Chili Peppers seem to be really enjoying themselves rather than just 'hitting territories' to sell more records. The crowd screams and applauds maniacally from start to finish, partly in disbelief that they are actually getting to see the band live. Caracas is a brutal place to be young, which only serves to heighten the atmosphere tonight, an unforgettable, intoxicatingly joyous release for the tens of thousands who have diligently saved to buy their tickets. Also, the only other act scheduled to play there this year is Shaggy. Understandably, they're making the most of it.

"THE AUDIENCE was so good tonight, so appreciative," says a shirtless Flea afterwards, perched on a white plastic chair as the band's personal effects –

diet books, joss sticks, rugs and so on – are packed into flight cases for the trip to their next show in Chile. "It's audiences like tonight that make me think that what we're doing is a really worthwhile thing. But being here is bizarre. It seems really dangerous and wild and crazy. The second we got off the airplane people started mobbing us. That's happened a lot of times, but it just didn't feel like normal, it felt dangerous. There was a look in their eyes, the way they were grabbing at us made me think, 'F---k, one of these people could take me out!' It didn't feel like they just wanted an autograph, you know what I mean? I don't know, there's a real intense energy here."

a lawyer or some corporate executive like her friends' parents in her fancy private school, but I know in her heart she's really proud of who I am and what I do."

Proud is a word that John Frusciante uses a lot, usually in reference to how he feels about the way things are going for the Chilis and his own contribution. Frusciante is swigging from a bottle of root beer as he enters the dressing room, his shoulder-length hair held in a ponytail. He too is bare-chested, though as our conversation progresses he will pull on a blue long-sleeved shirt and remove it again five minutes later. The guitarist will talk intelligently on any subject, though prefers music or films.

"BEING HERE IS BIZARRE. IT SEEMS REALLY DANGEROUS AND WILD AND CRAZY. INTENSE ENERGY." – FLEA

"I love to lay in bed at home watching an old black-and-white movie, James Cagney or Bob Hope," he says, his speech relaxed but deliberate. "I have one of those big plasma screens. It just looks so good and pleasant to fall asleep to."

On tour, Flea misses his 15-acre Malibu (neighbours include Tom Hanks), his girlfriend Tobey Torres, and surfing – though a day off tomorrow will be spent on a detour with Kiedis riding uncrowded, perfect waves in Peru. Chiefly, though, he misses his daughter. Is she happy that his hair is not blue any more?

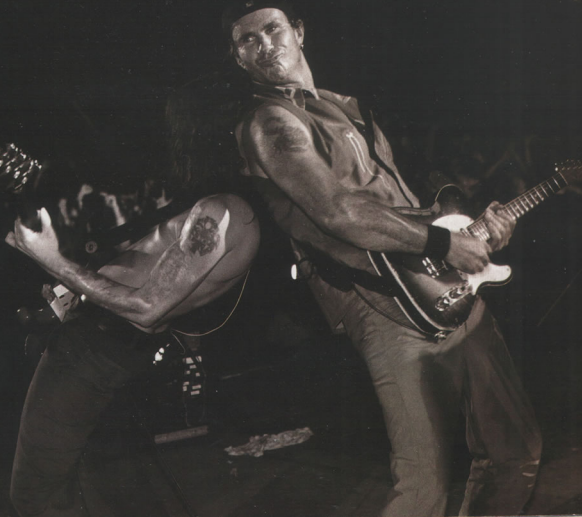
"I think she's getting cooler with that now. She's getting to the age where kids have funny haircuts so she doesn't think I'm such an idiot," he says clapping his hands together across his stomach, LOVE tattooed across the right knuckles, LOVE etched again across the left. "Perhaps sometimes she wishes I was

Home is a recently-purchased house in at the top of LA's Laurel Canyon, complete with a monstrous stereo system hooked-up by long-time Chilis producer Rick Rubin. Frusciante travels light – music mainly – with scant regard to wardrobe.

"I don't bring that many clothes. Three outfits maybe, and just whatever I'm comfortable in, it has nothing to do with the way I look because I just don't care," he laughs.

A FRESHLY SHOWERED Anthony Kiedis makes himself comfortable on a couch in the band's moodily lit backstage meditation room. Unlike his bandmates, ▶

Lean on me: Frusciante takes over from Flea on bass then offers support to stand-in guitarist Chad Smith at the Valle Des Pop in Caracas



he has covered his torso with a black vest (sorry, girls). "I just had a lovely Venezuelan plate of rice and beans, avocado, cucumber. It was great, real home cooking," he says. "So I'm fine, I'm fed. It's a really surreal and magnificent looking fantastic planet of weirdness here."

Even in this half-light the singer's dark brown eyes shine from beneath the damp strands of his fringe, his face a serene mix of post-show contentment and wariness at the conversation we might be about to have.

"It's not like I hate interviews... they're just normally not that satisfying, a routine series of uninteresting questions, the same thing over and over. Such as? I won't even try to regurgitate these questions. Fortunately I'm not carrying them around in my head right now."

It's fair to say that these questions involve playing gigs with socks on his dick and taking heroin, both dead subjects that the band have addressed fairly comprehensively over the years. The singer is currently among the world's most eligible bachelors, still single following a split from his girlfriend, Yohanna, earlier this year. As many of the songs from 'By The Way' were written when they were together, it must be difficult to perform them night after night.

"It hadn't been up until recently, for some reason," he says. "I still felt enough pain and enough love and enough of a connection to her that it was really exciting to play those songs because it reminded me of specific periods of time. Even if it was a sad feeling it was very inspiring. Very recently I stopped feeling so worried about her, even in memory, so it's become a little more difficult to get that open-heart feeling to connect with. Hopefully it's just a phase."

I read an interview with you where you were described as a "Type 'A' Personality"... He laughs.

"Did I offer that or was that the assessment?"

That was the assessment. What does that mean?

"I don't know what that is but they're right. I have type A blood and I guess Type 'A' people are — and I'm not proud to say this — control freaks by nature."

"I try so hard not to be because it gets me nowhere,



Press gang: the band face another barrage of questions about socks



Piece of the action: Frusciante and Kiedis hammer out another backstage tofo deal

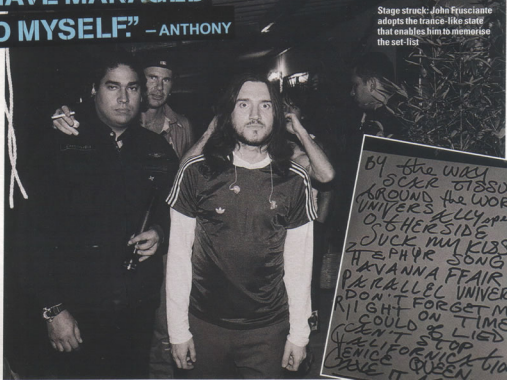
"THINGS WORK OUT WAY BETTER THAN I COULD EVER HAVE MANAGED OR MANIPULATED MYSELF" — ANTHONY

I do so much better when I just let the universe have its way with each and every person in situations in my life. Things work out way better than I ever could have manufactured or manipulated myself, and it's so much more fun and relaxing. I guess a Type 'A' personality is somebody who gets in an elevator and immediately hits the close button instead of just waiting the extra second for the doors to close by themselves."

And do you do that?

"I try not to."

Around midnight the crowds have dissipated, though the roads buzz with excited fans speeding wildly around sounding their horns, stereos cranked to nosebleed level. Tired but cheerful, the band board their minibuses for the drive back to their hotel. There aren't enough seatbelts for everyone, there's some fairly hostile terrain to cover and, at the tail-lights shudder up the rocky path leading away from the Valle Des Pop, it looks like it's going to be quite a bumpy ride. It's impossible say exactly how long the journey will take, but they'll get where they need to go eventually. ●



Stage struck: John Frusciante adopts the trance-like state that enables him to memorize the set list

BY THE WAY
SCAR TISSUE
AROUND THE WORLD
UNIVERSALLY SPEAK
OTHER SIDE
JUCK MY KISS
THE PUNK SONG
YOHANNA FFAIR
PARALLEL UNIVERSE
DON'T FORGET ME
RIGHT ON TIME
COULD SLID
CAN'T STOP
CALIFORNICATION
VENICE (BEN)
SAVE IT AWAY

THE SOFT PARADE

Socks kept away from the dong region and absolutely no career-cankering drugs, thank you very much. Ballads rule on this wilfully mature retrospective.

GREATEST HITS 2003, Warner Bros



GIVEN THE cynicism that first greeted the Red Hot Chili Peppers when they emerged from their LA rehearsal room in the early '80s, both the band themselves and anyone else old enough to remember their first musical efforts must be greeting the arrival of the band's latest 'hits' album with a certain amount of amusement. That the Chiliis have attracted a new audience with their adult grooves made this album an inevitability, but there was a time when they seemed little more than a quirky, idiosyncratic diversion from the stadium-bound cock rock of the '80s; a cod-funky afterthought made by overexcited kids with cool record collections and no inhibitions.

But in defiance of expectations these oiks have evolved into a spectacularly efficient mainstream rock behemoth, straddling stages and charts across the globe with consummate ease; pleasing critics, fans and those aforementioned cynics into the bargain. 'Greatest Hits' marks the point where the band stand back, arms folded, smug grins at the ready, and say, "Nice job, eh? Heroin? No thank you, we don't."

What this 16-track trawl through the Chiliis' last 14 years manifestly *doesn't* do is mark any kind of turning point in the band's creative endeavours. In fact, this serves primarily as a warning to any of their fans still clinging desperately to hopes that the band will ever again make a record as bristling with ideas as 'BloodSugarSexMagik' (their 1991 masterpiece and still the finest thing the band have recorded). "Forget it!" roars a track list that airbrushes out virtually all of the band's slap-bass driven funk metal.

And, of course, there's no reason why an album of the Chiliis' biggest chart-bothers *should* include their early fumbblings, but there is a real sense that the band are purposefully focusing on the more middle-aged, melodic songs that have brought them fame and fortune, deliberately eschewing the heavier, funkier sound that won them such a huge fan base in the first place. Consequently, there is only one track here (their version of Stevie Wonder's

'Higher Ground') from their 1989 breakthrough album, 'Mother's Milk', and, the ubiquitous 'Give It Away' and 'Suck My Kiss' aside, nary a whiff of anything that might scare newly-acquired admirers. Also from this era comes 'Soul To Squeeze', a song taken from the soundtrack to Dan Aykroyd's undeniably crappy 1993 'Coneheads' film. Utterly forgettable and devoid of any real spark, it's a song that

completists will be glad to have, but it's a shame that, say, 'Knock Me Down' or 'Funky Monks' couldn't have taken its place. Safe, comfortable and resolutely tuneful, this is a soft rock collection.

That's not to say that some of these songs aren't wonderful. 'Under The Bridge' and 'Breaking The Girl' were the exceptions to the band's funk-rock rule back in 1991, but now they ably represent the



"Everyone grab your best friend": the Chili Peppers at 25 per cent gooning power, 2003

beginnings of the band's progress to world domination. Poignant, subtle and elegant; it's no wonder that the world took to the Chilis. Things nearly took an unfortunate, downward turn when 'One Hot Minute' hit the shops in 1995. Having lost guitarist John Frusciante and replaced him with Jane's Addiction man Dave Navarro, the Chilis stumbled creatively, a fact backed up by the inclusion here of only one song from that period, the decidedly average 'My Friends'. Significantly, the absence of the snake-hipped 'Aeroplane' provides another clue to the purpose of this album; endorsing the band's gentler tendencies, bolstered by their recent return to commercial form. 'Californication', is represented by no fewer than five tracks, all of them laid-back, laden with world-weary pathos and sparkling, radio-friendly melodies. The title track and 'Road Trippin'' in particular are glorious proof that the band's songwriting had matured beyond measure - although with hindsight, 'Scar Tissue', 'Otherside' and 'Parallel Universe' are not that remarkable.

But as the 21st century loomed, the Chilis' were unstoppable and their audience had developed into one with wholly mainstream instincts and desires. As a result, the sprawling maze of sweetness that was 2002's 'By The Way' album made perfect sense. The Flea-driven title track aside, this was simply a collection of pointedly summery and eminently hummable radio-

This airbrushes out virtually all of the band's slap-bass driven funk metal.

smashes-in-wailing 'Greatest Hits' boasts only two of them ('By The Way' itself and 'Universally Speaking') but the way that the Chilis would now like to be perceived comes across loud and clear nonetheless. Easy on the funk, heavy on the singalong cheeriness. It's a formula that is working incredibly well and one that really suits the band as they enter their 40s and start to grow old with dignity.

Curiously, the two new tracks that ensure that no self-respecting Chilis aficionado will miss out on this album, sound suspiciously like rejects from 'By The Way'. 'Fortune Faded' is likeable enough, despite being a rather uneventful choice for a single, and 'Save The Population' comes and goes without making any great impact. We will have to wait until the next studio album to see if the Red Hot Chili Peppers still have fire, if not funk, in their bellies.



TRACK BY TRACK

1 'Under The Bridge'

An exquisite melody meets some seriously dark, drug-related subject matter. The Chilis' first classic ballad.

2 'Give It Away'

Their last and finest statement as kings of metallic funkery. How many times have you danced to it?

3 'Californication'

A punsome title and a towering tone combine to make one of the Chilis' most satisfying anthems.

4 'Scar Tissue'

The Chilis flex their middle-of-the-road muscles and come up with a subtly addictive melodic hook.

5 'Soul To Squeeze'

Pointlessly rescued from the soundtrack of the woefully rubbish 'Coneheads', this is four minutes of f**k-all.

6 'Otherside'

Chilled out and dripping with melancholy. One of their first convincing stabs at grown-up rock.

7 'Suck My Kiss'

Bolshy, balsy and hung like a stallion, this is the sound of the band itching to gatecrash stadiums.

8 'By The Way'

Half lifting melody, half thunderous groove, this was a deservedly enormous worldwide hit.

9 'Parallel Universe'

Slightly half-hearted attempt to be up-tempo that pales besides previous efforts to do the same.

10 'Breaking The Girl'

A strong whiff of The Beatles permeates this understated, wistful waltz. One of the Chilis' sweetest songs.

11 'My Friends'

Exit Frusciante. Enter Navarro. The Chilis started making dodgy records, as this amply proves.

12 'Higher Ground'

Stevie Wonder's classic gets the treatment. With splendid results.

13 'Universally Speaking'

Soft as shite but indubitably charming, the Chilis at their radio-friendly, approaching-middle-age best.

14 'Road Trippin''

Poignant lyrics and an elegiac refrain. A heartstring-tugging lark.

15 'Fortune Faded'

Despite being likeable enough, this latest is far from being the greatest.

16 'Save The Population'

Again, far from their best. A rather half-arsed end to the album.

ANTHONY KIEDIS is sitting on a couch in the band's backstage meditation room. Along with his bandmates, Kiedis seems content to live in the moment, grateful that, after nearly two decades of perseverance through some difficult times, the Chili Peppers have somehow emerged as a global force with their demons wrestled into submission and their songwriting at a career high. The band express a bemused gratitude that somehow they have reached this point, but they all seem reluctant to over-analyse their turbulent history or anticipate what lies ahead, almost in fear of jinxing the whole thing.

"I try not to think about the future," says Flea running a hand through his bleached hair. "It could end tomorrow, you know?"

You seem very happy as a band at the moment...

Flea: "Yeah, we're happy. The underlying love we have for one another is very powerful and it's always there, there's always a very deep understanding that we believe in what we're doing is really important to us, but we definitely have our dynamics of not getting along with each other and frustrating each other sometimes. But we're in a good place as a band, we've been together for a long time and cut through a lot of the bullshit, you know, we feel like we work hard."

Anthony Kiedis: "It's fun, it's really fun. I can't think of a better way of spending my time."

And you operate at a pretty good comfort level, presumably?

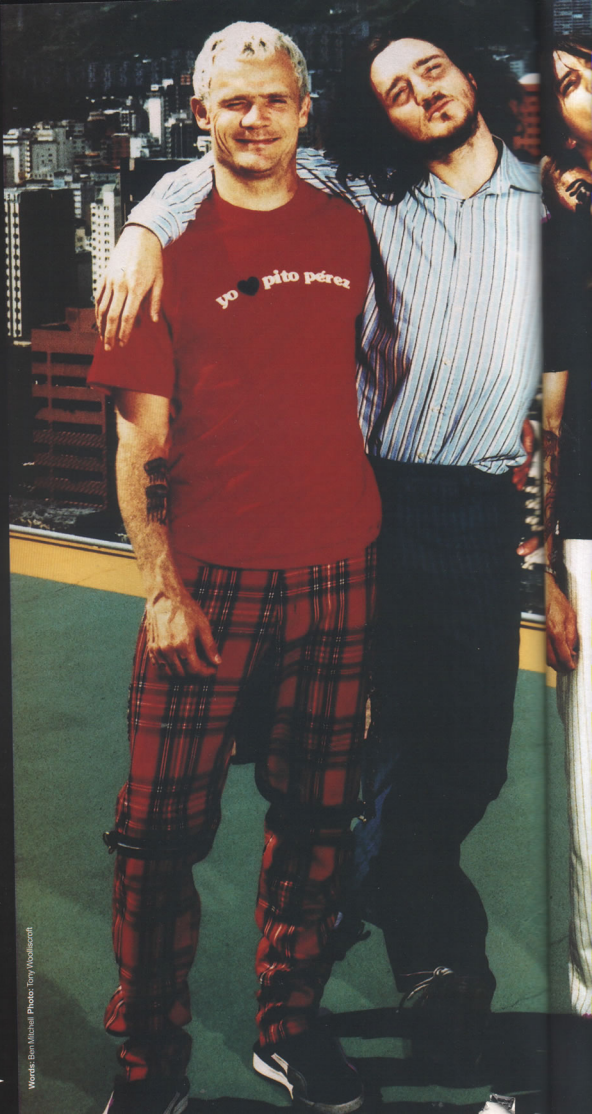
Chad Smith: "Oh shit, yeah — we fly around in private planes and stay in the nicest hotels. It's ridiculous. Way too pampered little adolescent rockers in our little bubble, we just move our bubble around. We appreciate what we have, though, we're just so into playing."

Anthony: "On our very first tour, we set out in a blue Chevy van to cross the United States of America. We'd show up at these bars and clubs and barns — that was pretty interesting, about as real as it gets."

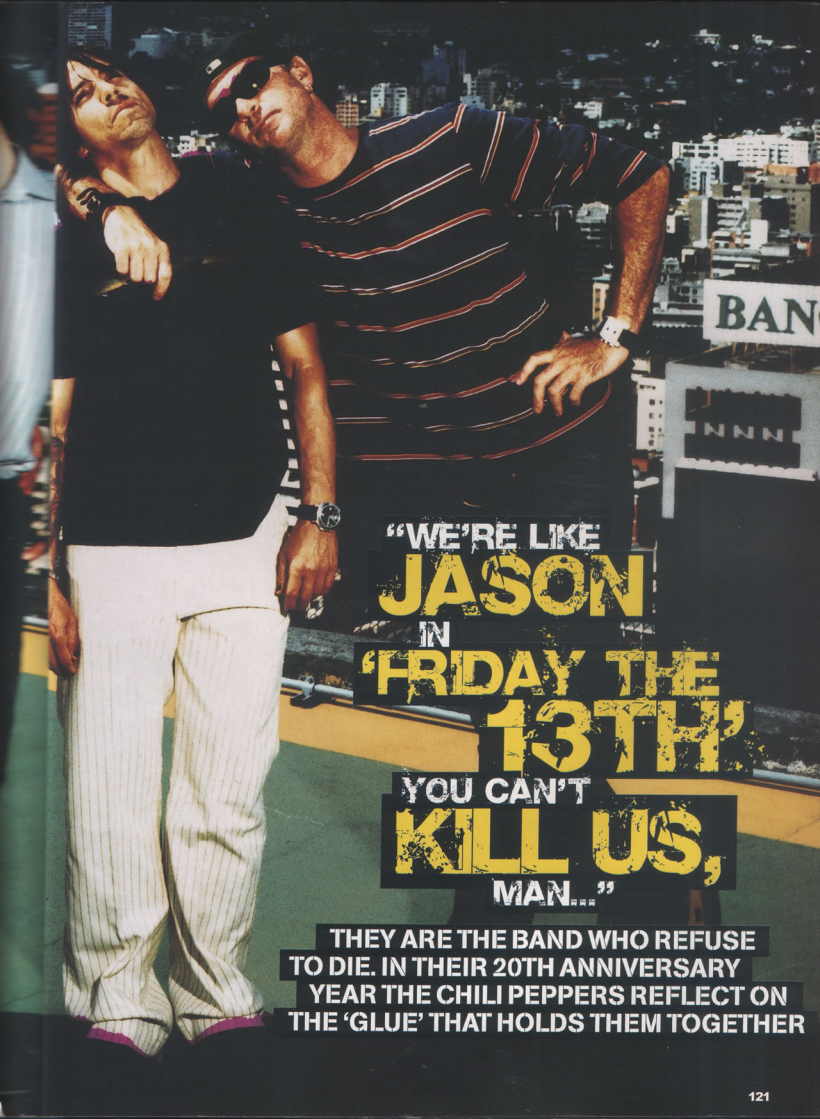
Do you miss those days?

Anthony: "Well, I don't. I've definitely grown to enjoy our new style of travel. One time, me and Flea had to push a giant bass amp half a mile down Hollywood boulevard to play a show because we had no other means, so I love the way we travel now."

Chad: "I miss playing smaller shows when ▶

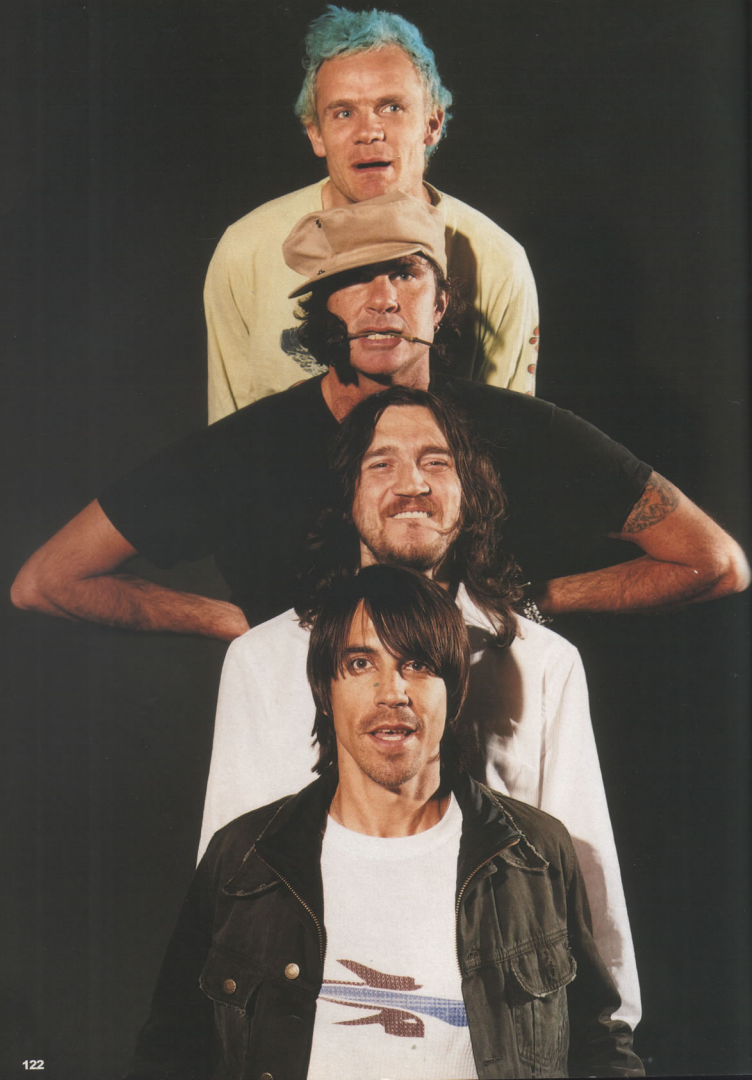


Words: Ben Mitchell Photo: Tony Woods/cort



“WE’RE LIKE
JASON
IN
‘FRIDAY THE
13TH’
YOU CAN’T
KILL US,
MAN...”

THEY ARE THE BAND WHO REFUSE
TO DIE. IN THEIR 20TH ANNIVERSARY
YEAR THE CHILI PEPPERS REFLECT ON
THE ‘GLUE’ THAT HOLDS THEM TOGETHER



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PHOTO: PAUL HARRIS

it was easier to walk around in the crowd, but we'd have to spend two weeks in one city to do that now."

If you had to go back to sharing a room with someone else in the band, who would it be?

John Frusciante: "Flea, probably. It's very difficult to imagine it because you get used to stuff like that when you're touring as a club band, but when we started touring for 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik', we started getting our own rooms and at that point it instantly became unimaginable to share with anybody else.

Chad: "Flea."

Anthony: "I've shared a room with everyone in this band, but I think at this point Flea and I are most bio-rhythmically in sync with our sleeping patterns. It doesn't sound pleasant, but it would be the lesser of all the evils. Definitely not Chad Smith. Love the man, don't want to room with him."

Flea: "Chad, I always used to room with Chad. One night—and this really gave me an insight into Chad's mind—he was sleeping. I looked over at him. I thought he was awake but he was dreaming with his eyes open, looking up at the ceiling shouting, 'You motherf---ker! See you up there. I'll get you, you motherf---ker! Come on!' He told me afterwards in his dream he was seeing some 12-legged spider monster. In my dream, if there's some 12-legged spider monster thing, I'm running away, but Chad wanted it."

If you could visit yourselves as young Red Hot Chili Peppers, what would your advice be to yourselves?

Anthony: [Laughs] "Well, I can guarantee my 18-year-old self wouldn't listen to any advice coming from me. It just wouldn't happen."

John: "Well, it's a hard question to answer because I did get the perfect advice from voices in my head... tons of it, simple things like how I should dress or how I should have my hair to how my music should go—which I ignored."

Flea: "Just to love myself, not to beat myself up so much. I've done too much of that over the years."

Chad: "Don't do as I do, do as I say [Laughs]. No, I'd say be your own person, follow your heart and what ever you do, do it with *mucho gusto*."

Have you given much thought to the next record?

John: "Sometimes things cross my mind. I've done so many interviews about this last record I get more people asking why I isn't more punk rock or why it isn't more funk and sometimes it makes me just want to show those people. Because we play the hardest things at rehearsal, we play the funkiest things, the fastest heaviest shit and it doesn't wind up being on the record because it just ends up the way it ends up. I constantly have to explain why it sounds the way it does, which makes me want to just do a record that's everything this record isn't, because even though the response from people is good, critics who don't give a f--- about punk rock, say... Look, in 1979, when punk was my whole life, who knows what those people were listening to? It wasn't punk because they definitely don't get what the spirit of punk is—they think it just means playing fast and hard. To me, punk is doing something new, being original... being yourself, that's number one when it's about."

Do you feel that you've mellowed?

Flea: "My feelings are still pretty f---king intense. I feel

I've deepened and learned to deal with my anger and put it in a better place. I used to fly off the handle a lot but I don't do that any more, mainly because I've realized it's useless, just a waste of energy and a waste of time. I used to get really frustrated with people and things. When I felt misunderstood or I felt people were being disrespectful to me I'd just explode. Now if someone's frustrating me I just try to give them as much love as I can."

Chad: "I think there's as much fire and passion in the music as ever."

So what can we expect next from the Chili Peppers?

Anthony: "Well, try not to expect anything and you'll be pleasantly surprised with whatever you get. We really have a lot of work to do that we're looking forward to doing. I feel like we've just begun to tap into this great pool of inspiration and excitement about music and songwriting, we're barely getting into it and I feel if we can stay cool with each other..."

Is that a problem?

Anthony: "It takes work for sure. At the beginning and the end of every day we just love each other as friends and as people, but in between it can get a little sticky sometimes. We work it out though, we're pretty willing to get over these things."

Can you imagine life without the band?

Anthony: "I suppose some day that's going to

"I CAN GUARANTEE MY 18-YEAR-OLD SELF WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ANY ADVICE COMING FROM ME. IT JUST WOULDN'T HAPPEN." — ANTHONY

happen, but right now I see myself much more clearly going about the business of playing shows, writing songs and recording. I feel like I just joined this band."

John: "Someday, I'm pretty happy with the way things are going now. As long as we're passionate about it, if the energy is coming as strongly and powerfully as it has been in the last few years then we'll keep playing. It'll be very obvious when we're forcing it and at that point I won't be able to go on doing it."

Flea: "I try not to imagine the future at all. Maybe once in a while I have a really cool vision of me really old with long silver hair and a beard in a nice suit, sitting by the fireplace reading a book. It's funny. I remember 20 years ago I was sitting around with a friend getting high. He said, 'What's it going to be like when we're old?' He goes, 'Oh, we're going to be sitting around in a hot tub listening to Led Zeppelin, taking bong hits and getting blow-jobs. It's going to be great!' I remember thinking that was reassuring, that secure vision of the future. I really try not to think about the past or the future, just be in the moment that I'm in."

Anthony: "I'd rather be in the moment than anywhere else, it's the least terrifying place to be for sure. You know the old expression: if you've got one foot in the past and one foot in the future then you're slipping all over today? I guess I have some things I'm looking forward to in the back of my mind, and I'm looking forward to the holidays as well. I always go to Michigan for Christmas, because that's where my

family is, but we usually have a little break at the beginning of January and I find an island somewhere to swim in crystal clear aqua. I try to swim wherever I can, but I won't go in chlorine. I don't care for it, I like salt water."

Do you surf on a break? Are you a good surfer?

Anthony: "No, I'm not a good surfer. I don't surf that often—but that doesn't stop me from surfing. We were in Costa Rica recently and we had a day off. We got lucky, took a little plane and landed in a small village that had a perfect surfing beach. I caught one magical ride, and that's always enough to keep me coming back. That was a pretty genius little day off there."

Flea, you seem to be the glue that's held the band together through some tough times...

Flea: "Sometimes. I think at different times each one of us has been in that position. There's been times when I've been that and other times when I've not been that at all—sometimes I've been totally off in my own world. I really have the tendency to float off, to be not present. I'm making much more effort to be there for everyone all the time."

Do you have any regrets?

Chad: "In the words of the great Bullthole Surfers, it's better to regret something you did than something you didn't do. People make mistakes and you live by them, it's just that we're a little more in the public eye so people know about our ups and downs. I don't regret anything."

John: "Somebody who's as happy as I am and as proud of what they've done as I am, it's silly to say that I regret anything. There are things that I've done that I'm not proud of, but they've all gone into making me the songwriter and musician that I am."

Flea: "No regrets... I've made a lot of mistakes, a lot of terrible mistakes..."

As everyone does...

Flea: "Some people don't! Some people are really f---king smart from the get-go. Some people never self-destruct or ever hurt people or do things that are blatantly harmful to their emotional and spiritual state."

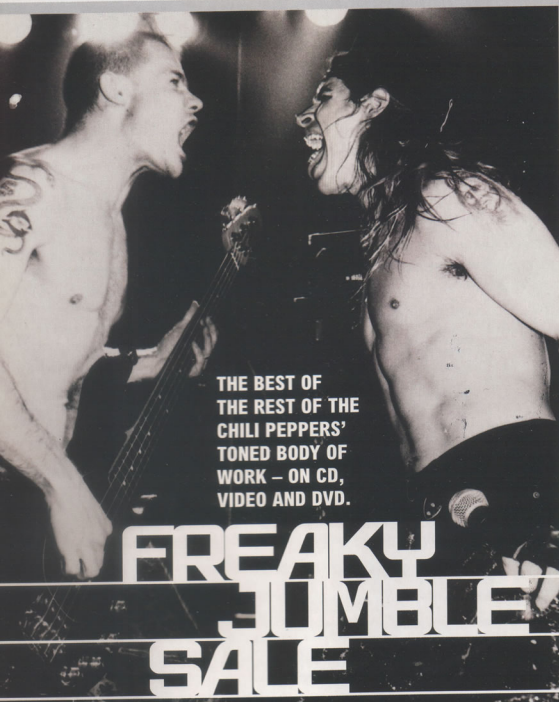
So what keeps the band together?

Flea: "The band stays together because it's fun. We believe in what we do and in each other. We believe in the whole ball of wax. It's always moving and changing, so it stays interesting. If I were just repeating ourselves then we'd probably have broken up."

Chad: "Our love for each other and the passion for playing music together, there are some common goals there. As long as we have those things, there's no reason for us to stop. When it stops being like that then we won't do it any more, we're not going to do 20 farewell tours... every tour's our farewell tour."

John: "At this point, we all are very aware of each other and we all want the others to be happy, so if there's any weird energy sensed by anybody we try and get to the bottom of it. It's more important to the band that I'm happy than it is that they're happy, and the same goes for me with them. I'm more concerned with how Flea and Anthony and Chad are feeling than how I am. That's definitely what keeps us together."

Anthony: "We all love the same thing—making music together and none of us want to sacrifice that." **Chad:** "We're like Jason in Friday The 13th". You can't kill us, man, we keep coming back." ●



THE BEST OF
THE REST OF THE
CHILI PEPPERS'
TONED BODY OF
WORK — ON CD,
VIDEO AND DVD.

FREAKY JUMBLE SALE



JOHN FRUSCIANTE
NIANDRA LADES
AND USUALLY JUST
A T-SHIRT
(AMERICAN, 1994)
K K K

STRUNG OUT on heroin and wallowing in the depths of depression, Frusciante quietly released his debut 'Niandra LaDes And Usually Just A T-Shirt' in 1994. That was two years after walking out on the Chilis and at the behest of his friends Perry Farrell, the Butthole Surfers' Gibby Haynes and the now-deceased River Phoenix. They believed that "there's no good music any more" and thought that perhaps Frusciante could remedy the situation.

The release was a collection of two separate recordings. "Niandra LaDes", the first half recorded at various times while he was in the Chilis and occasionally featuring con-

tributions from Phoenix, is a self-produced 12-song journey through Frusciante's addled mind, while the other portion, "Usually Just A T-Shirt" comprises 13 untitled experimental tracks.

His gifted guitar playing shines through on tracks such as 'Head (Beach Arab)', 'Mascara' and a frenzied cover of Bad Brains' 'Big Takeover'. 'Been Insane', in hindsight, shows his personal torment. The lyric, *'I've been in pain, hope it doesn't show, I've been insane, well the time is slow'* paints a harrowing picture.

Frusciante's genius is self-evident, but to the casual Chili Pepper fan, the raw honesty and drug-fueled self-indulgence of "Niandra LaDes..." may be a little too much. This lo-fi effort was often an unlistenable din only momentarily revealing his unbridled talent. It sank without trace, shifting only 45,000 copies worldwide.



JOHN FRUSCIANTE
SMILE FROM
THE STREETS
YOU HOLD
(BIRDMAN, 1997)
K K

THE GUITARIST'S second solo effort is as far from his debut as could be possible — and rather disappointing. Half of the songs were written and recorded in 1995, the rest of the album — including 'Fall Through The Ground' recorded when he was just 17, was hastily cobbled together and, in a word, woeful. Frusciante has admitted he wrote the album purely to fund his heroin addiction and it is a sorrowful document of his personal hell. The album has since been deleted at Frusciante's request.



JOHN FRUSCIANTE
TO RECORD
ONLY WATER
FOR TEN DAYS
(WARNER BROS, 2003)
K K K K

THANK GOD for Frusciante's self-determination. His decision to clean himself up paved the way for a second chance to join the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Two years after the release of their 1999 'Californication' album, the sharper, more focused guitarist recorded his third solo album.

Embracing the electronica of Depeche Mode and New Order, Frusciante ditched his four-track recorder in favour of a digital eight-track machine and used synthesisers and drum machines to great effect.

By this time a totally clean-and-sober yoga devotee, 'To Record Only Water For Ten Days' reflects the guitarist's new found respect for life. While it retains the seat-of-his-pants experimental touches which were evident on his first two albums, there is a profound sense of optimism and stunning songwriting in evidence, most notably on the touching 'The First Season'. Although this is a solo album in every sense of the word — Frusciante wrote all the songs and played all the instruments — there is no cloud of self-indulgence.

Opening track 'Going Inside' sets a positive precedent with the words, *'You don't throw your life away'*, while a distorted squeal prefaces a stream of guitar flourishes and impassioned vocals. 'Remain' is a bastardised blues paean, an acoustic refrain competes with a drum machine pattern to startling effect. 'Murderers' nurtures a simple riff reminiscent of 'Head (Beach Arab)' from his debut and is gradually coated in a pop vocal melody arriving at a sublime conclusion. However, 'The First Season' is the undoubted highlight. Remaining consistent with the album's simplistic nature, John flexes a delicate vocal melody against a tear-jerking string section. Even the most cursory of listens will leave you wanting to hear more. A gem.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
PSYCHEDELIC SEXFUNK LIVE FROM HEAVEN

(EMI, 1993)



RECORDED LIVE at Long Beach Arena, California during the 'Mother's Milk' world tour, 'Psychedelic Sexfunk Live From Heaven' captures the band at their best.

Despite running only a disappointing 40 minutes, this video is an appropriate document of the band's first steps towards worldwide fame. The set-list features 'Stone Cold Bush', 'Sexy Mexican Maid', 'Good Time Boys', 'Pretty Little Ditty' and the classic 'Knock Me Down' while Flea, independent in a red cheerleader skirt, carps out his own rendition of 'Star Spangled Banner' on a trumpet.

The behind-the-scenes stuff is amusing with Frusciante explaining how he accidentally ripped a hole in his boxer shorts, Flea squirting superglue into his thumb and Chad Smith curling one out before the show. "It's a good shit," he explains, helpfully.

Although now deleted, you can still find copies of this video at online retailers without being fleeced by cyber-linkers on eBay, worthwhile purchase.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
FUNKY MONKS

(WARNER MUSIC VISION, 1993)



DIRECTED BY Gavin Bowden, 'Funky Monks' is a beautifully shot,

hour-long, black-and-white documentary following the recording sessions for what became 'BloodSugarSexMagik'.

The band were poised on the cusp of world domination and the album was a crucial step in the foursome's career. By moving into a supposedly haunted mansion in the Hollywood Hills, they lived and breathed the songs that would pave the way to massive commercial success. (Although drummer Chad Smith stayed in his own house nearby, uneasy about sharing his living quarters with the supernatural.)

'Funky Monks' offers real insight into the frantic Peppers at work and play and features excerpts from the album and a handful of their rarer songs - 'Soul To Squeeze', 'Sikamikanico' and their funk-fueled tribute to the revolutionary Nigerian musician Fela Suti, charmingly titled 'Fela's Cock'.

Interspersed with footage of the band actually recording, we see Flea being an attentive father to his daughter Clara, Chad riding his motorbike around Los Angeles, Anthony discussing frankly the inspiration behind the hit single 'Under the Bridge' and Frusciante trying desperately to grow sideburns.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
WHAT HITS?

(EMI, 1992)



EMI, HOME to the Red Hot Chili Peppers until the release of 'Mother's Milk', were quick to release a 'What Hits?' CD compilation when 'Under the Bridge' (on Warner Bros) became a hit.

This video version followed shortly after and the compilers even went to the trouble of making a clip for 'Behind The Sun', from 'The Uplift Mofo Party Plan'. Trouble was, the footage featured John Frusciante on guitar and Chad Smith on drums when in fact the late Hillel Slovak and Jack Irons were in the band at that time. 'Show Me Your Soul', taken from the 'Pretty Woman' soundtrack, thankfully spares us the sight of Richard Gere rutting on a grand piano. Instead, the concept revolves around Kiedis crooning away in a roomful of mirrors.

Amid the performance footage, 'Taste The Pain' features glimpses of artwork by artist Robert Williams, who also painted the image used on Guns N'Roses controversial 'Appetite For Destruction' album sleeve.

The further back we delve into the Chili Peppers archive, the more embarrassing the videos are, in particular 'True Men Don't Kill Coyotes' and 'Jungle Man'. 'Catholic School Girls Rule' tries too hard to be controversial and is cringeworthy. 'Fire', recorded at a European outdoor festival is notable for the fact the band are playing in their classic 'sock' uniform.



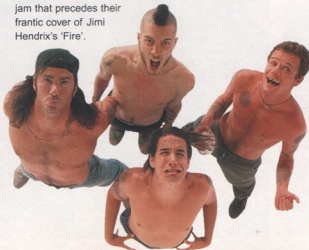
RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
OFF THE MAP

(WARNER MUSIC VISION, 2003)



WITH FORMER Jane's Addiction guitarist Dave Navarro ejected, and John Frusciante back in the camp, 'Off The Map' is a visually pleasing document of the 'Californication' world tour.

Onstage, the members demonstrate an almost telepathic feel for each other and this is most evident in the 'What Is Soul?' jam that precedes their frantic cover of Jimi Hendrix's 'Fire'.



Other tracks include 'Around The World', 'Scar Tissue' and 'Easily'. Frusciante also performs 'Usually Just A T-Shirt 3' from his 'Niandra LaDes...' solo album.

Frusciante's newly clean-and-sober lifestyle is the focus of the backstage footage which shows that stretching, herbal tea and incense have replaced heroin, booze and tobacco in the guitarist's world. A far cry from the band who penned the song 'Good Time Boys'.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
LIVE AT SLANE CASTLE

(WARNER MUSIC VISION, 2003)



WHAT BETTER band to catch at an outdoor festival on a hot summer's evening? The Red Hot Chili Peppers are captured here at full throttle in the stunning setting of Dublin's Slane Castle.

Billed as a greatest hits package, the band's taut two hours concentrates on material sourced from their groundbreaking 1991 album 'BloodSugarSexMagik' onwards, with stunning performances from all four members.

What sets it apart from your lavish multi-angle video shoot is the innovative use of the 'time-slice' technique, a slow-motion trick used heavily in 'The Matrix' trilogy. This technical wizardry has never been employed in a live concert recording.

Whereas the 'Off The Map' patchy performance video merely hinted at the Californian foursome's muscular funk metal, 'Live At Slane Castle' is an essential purchase for any Chili Peppers fan.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
OUT IN LA

(EMI, 1994)



IF THE 'What Hits?' album and video hadn't milked the 'Chills' EMI back catalogue enough, then 'Out In LA' would definitely leave the vaults well and truly dry.

Billed as a 'rarities' collection, 'Out In LA' is, in fact, a collection of half-baked joke songs, poor remixes and demo versions of songs - including this set's title-track, 'Get Up And Jump' and 'Green Heaven' - that are easily outshone by the finished and fully produced album versions.

That's not to say that the whole album is akin to the sound of the barrel being scraped. The live versions of Hendrix's 'Castles Made Of Sand' and Thelonicus Monk's 'FU' are interesting, and so too is Kiedis and Flea's midnight demo version of 'What It Is?'. Listen closely and you'll hear an irate neighbour begging the duo to "shut the fuck up".

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Jess wears 'I must not worship Satan' girls baseball shirt (£14.99)



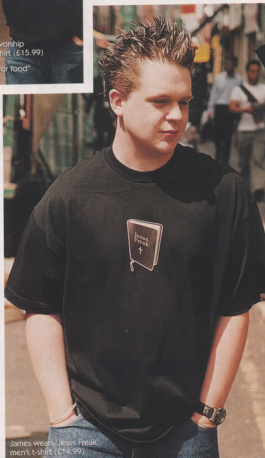
Hollie wears 'Evil Smiley' girls' camouflage strap vest (£15.99)



Jess wears 'I must not worship Satan' girls slash neck shirt (£15.99)
James wears 'Will rock for food' men's hoodie (£24.99)



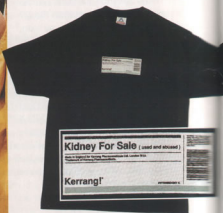
Claire wears 'Pretty Vacant' girls baseball top (£17.99)



James wears 'Jesus Freak' men's t-shirt (£14.99)



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WIN

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CHILI PEPPERS

STUFF!

Ever feel like something's not quite right? In this picture Flea has absent-mindedly forgotten to wear any clothes, but what he lacks in modesty he more than makes up for in talent. As a result, the bassist and his hard-rocking compadres have sold many millions of records. Now here's your chance to taste some of that glory with your own personalised Chili Peppers multi-platinum disc!

YOU WANT to get your hands on an exclusive piece of music history? Nice! Commemorating a shedload of sales for the guys' albums since '91, we're offering a true one-off collector's item that we personally guarantee will make you more popular, even if you are currently not well-liked at all! Unfortunately we can't show this tasty piece of memorabilia here because it will be custom made for YOU and bear YOUR name!

For a chance to win, simply complete and cut out the form (below) and send it to Chilis Kerrang! Legends, PO Box 2930, London W1A 6DZ. If you can't stand the thought of hacking away at this very reasonably-priced memento, you can either buy another one (a course of action we would strongly advise), photograph the form or send the answer on a letter to the same address.

The first correct answer pulled out of the sock drawer wins. The lucky reader will be notified by telephone or email. Good luck, mofos!



WIN CHILI PEPPERS COMMEMORATIVE DISC!

You've bought the records, so in some ways this fantastic disc belongs to all of you. Sadly, there can be only one winner. To be that incredibly fortunate person, all you have to do is return this form to us by March 4, 2004. The first correct answer we can read wins so please use **BLOCK CAPITALS**. Photocopies accepted. Enter as many times as you like!

YOUR DETAILS:

Send to Kerrang!
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London W1A 6DZ

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

DAYTIME TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

QUESTION: FLEA'S REAL NAME IS _____

TICK HERE IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE NOTIFIED OF FUTURE KERRANG! PROMOTIONS

[SIGN OFF]



Photo: Lisa Johnson

[STIMULANTS:]



THE BOMBING EXPLOSION WAS CREATED USING THE WORD 'FUNK', A TOTAL RESULT FOR LEEDS, CRAZY FE'S 22ND BIRTHDAY FANDANGO, ANOTHER NOODY JR., "THANKS KEITH, THAT WAS... GREAT", DAVE'S DVD HEIST, THE IRON RULE OF SUPERINTENDENT BLAKE, CHAD SMITH'S CUT-OFFS, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF AEROSMITH, TWO TINS OF CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS AND ABSOLUTELY NO HEROIN WHATSOEVER. HONEST. ■

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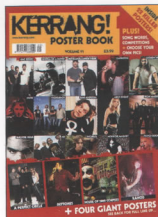
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